

SACHARISSA

SOME ACCOUNT OF

Dorothy Sidney, Countess of Sunderland

HER FAMILY & FRIENDS

by

JULIA CARTWRIGHT



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SACHARISSA

SOME ACCOUNT OF

DOROTHY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF SUNDERLAND

HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS

1617—1684

BY

JULIA CARTWRIGHT

(MRS. HENRY ADY)

AUTHOR OF "MADAME," "BEATRICE D'ESTE," ETC., ETC.

"The fine women they show me nowadays are at best but pretty girls to me, who have seen Sacharissa, when all the world repeated the poems she inspired. That graceful motion, that awful mien, that winning attraction, are now no more seen. They tell me I am old. I am glad I am so, for I do not like your present young ladies."—*Tatler*, vol. ii. p. 61.

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PREFACE

THE name of Sacharissa lives for all time in Waller's verse. The lyrics written in her praise do not amount to more than twenty ; but small as is their number they sufficed to make the bard supreme among the singers of his age. So, at least, he appeared in the eyes of his contemporaries. "*Inter poetas facile princeps*" were the words inscribed upon his tomb, and that, as his latest biographer¹ remarks, at a time when Milton and Herrick and Dryden were all living. A hundred years after his death he was still extolled as the most celebrated lyric poet that England had ever produced. Since then his fame has suffered a partial eclipse ; but we may safely say, that whatever share of immortality he enjoys is due to the Sacharissa poems. As long as the English tongue is spoken, the *Song to the Rose*, and the less known but scarcely less perfect *Verses on a Girdle*, will be remembered.

Of late years much has been written on the revolution which Waller effected in English poetry, and the exact place which he occupies in our literature. These pages are devoted to the history of Sacharissa. For the lady whose charms he celebrates under this classical name was no creation of his fancy, but a beautiful and charming maiden, Dorothy Sidney, the eldest daughter of Robert, second Earl of Leicester, whom the poet courted unsuccessfully during many years before her marriage.

"Thirsis, a youth of the inspired train,
Fair Sacharissa loved, but loved in vain ;
Like Phœbus sung the no less amorous boy,
Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy."

As Beatrice and Laura represent the ideal lady of Dante and of Petrarch's age, so Waller's Sacharissa is the type of

¹ Mr. Edmund Gosse,

all that was fair and excellent in the womanhood of the seventeenth century. But Sacharissa, unlike *ces belles dames du tems jadis*, is more for us than a mere dream of beauty and goodness. She has a very attractive and interesting personality of her own.

The pictures of her which Vandyke painted, as she appeared to Waller in the bloom of her youthful loveliness, adorn the walls of more than one ancient and stately house. At Penshurst, at Althorp, at Petworth, we see her under many forms and in many different costumes, and always, as Horace Walpole said, "charmingly handsome." But the pathos of her brief married life has invested her with a deeper charm than either poet or painter's art. For this mournful tale, and for the story of her varied and changeful lot, we must turn to contemporary records. There we see her, as she appeared in the eyes of the men and women of that generation, who knew her in turn as daughter, wife, and mother, as sister and as friend. One and all bear witness to the same perfections of body and mind. "Wit and discretion," writes Dorothy Osborne, no mean judge of her own sex, "were reconciled in her person, that have so seldom been persuaded to meet in anybody else."

"Naught like to her the earth enfolds."

Men and women of the most opposite kind, persons of the most different character, admired and loved her with the same devotion. Young and old, grave and gay, scholars and statesmen, soldiers and poets, fashionable ladies and solemn divines, all took delight in her company, and came to her for advice and help. And as she grew older she lost none of her fascination. After being courted by the finest gentlemen of the first Charles's Court, she lived to become intimately connected with the leading statesmen in the reign of Charles II., and carried the traditions of a purer age into that lax and dissolute society. Long after her death, the vision of her beauty lived in the hearts of those who remembered her in the flower of her age, and the writers of Queen Anne's reign recalled Sacharissa as the one perfect and peerless woman they had known. So the writers of the day speak, with one accord, of Dorothy Sidney.

But when we come to look into the annals of the period, it is disappointing to find how little more about her they have to tell. The members of her family were remarkable for their cultured tastes and literary habits. Their private history is rich in documents. Their journals and letters have been given to the world in the collections of Collins and Blencowe. We are familiar with the household at Penshurst, and the home life of the Sidneys. We hear a great deal about Dorothy's father and mother, a great deal about her brothers and her suitors, but very little about herself. Above all, we have to deplore the loss of almost the whole of her vast correspondence.

All the Sidneys were admirable letter-writers. It was a gift which every member of the family seemed to inherit in turn. Both Lord and Lady Leicester's letters are very pleasant reading, while their son Algernon's are models of fine thought and feeling, as finely expressed. And Lady Dorothy was no exception to the rule. She was an active letter-writer all through her life, and in her later years she kept up a brisk correspondence with two of the foremost statesmen in Charles II's reign, her own son, Robert, Lord Sunderland, and her son-in-law, the great Lord Halifax. Her letters were eagerly sought after, in the large circle of her friends. Every one wanted to hear from her, and Henry Savile, himself a brilliant letter-writer, speaks of her pen as "the most eloquent in England." But of this mass of writing, only the merest fragments are left us. Dorothy's letters to her mother and her husband, to her brothers and sisters, have all perished, and not a single specimen remains of the correspondence which she carried on during so many years with her son.

All we have are three little notes to her father, and twenty-four letters which belong to the close of her life, and were written in 1679 and 1680. Thirteen of these were addressed to her brother, Henry Sidney, during his absence as Envoy at the Hague, and were first published by Blencowe in Henry Sidney's *Diary of the Times of Charles II.* The other eleven were written to her son-in-law, George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, and were published by Miss Berry in 1815, from originals in the Duke of Devonshire's possession.

These letters we now give our readers, together with all that can be learnt about Lady Sunderland in the Sidney papers, or gleaned from contemporary memoirs and letters. Our knowledge, it must be confessed, is sadly limited. But everything relating to Sacharissa is worthy of record, both for her own sake, and for that of the distinguished men and women among whom she lived. Perhaps, in future days, new discoveries may yet be made, which may throw fresh light on the subject, and help to fill up the gaps in a most interesting and eventful life.

Some portions of the present work have already appeared in print, in three articles, entitled "Sunderland and Sacharissa," "Sacharissa's Letters," and "The Savile papers," originally contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine* some years ago, and now re-published by the kind permission of the editor.

The illustrations are all taken from paintings in the Gallery at Althorp, which have been reproduced by Lord Spencer's kind permission.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

1500—1617

The Sidney Family—Grant of Penshurst—The Dudleys—Sir Philip Sidney—Barbara Gamage—Birth of Dorothy ... *Pages* 1—12

CHAPTER II

1617—1630

Dorothy's Parents—Penshurst—Arcadia—Family Traditions
Pages 13—25

CHAPTER III

1617—1634

Childhood and Youth—Lady Leicester—Mr. Waller's Courtship—*Song to the Rose* *Pages* 26—36

CHAPTER IV

1634—1636

The Sacharissa Poems—Vandyke's Portraits—Lord Leicester's Embassy to Paris *Pages* 37—46

CHAPTER V

1636—1637

Dorothy's Suitors—Lord Devonshire—Lady Leicester's Letters—Leicester House... .. *Pages* 47—56

CHAPTER VI

1637—1638

Lord Lovelace's Wooing—Dr. Hammond at Penshurst—Sir William Temple *Pages* 57—65

CHAPTER VII

1638—1639

Dorothy's Letters—Lord Spencer—Dorothy's Marriage... *Pages* 66—74

CHAPTER VIII

1639—1642

Lady Leicester and Lady Spencer at Paris—Birth of Children—Return to England—The Civil War *Pages* 75—85

CHAPTER IX

1642—1643

Lord Sunderland's Letters—Edgehill—Oxford—Siege of Gloucester
Pages 86—97

CHAPTER X

1643

Battle of Newbury—Death of Lord Sunderland—The News brought to
Penshurst *Pages* 98—107

CHAPTER XI

1643—1650

Birth of Harry Spencer—Lord Leicester dismissed from Office—The
Royal Children at Penshurst—Princess Elizabeth's Jewel
Pages 108—119

CHAPTER XII

1650—1652

Marriage of Lady Strangford—Lady Sunderland at Althorp—Death of
Elizabeth and Frances Sidney *Pages* 120—129

CHAPTER XIII

1652

Lady Sunderland's Second Marriage—The Smythes of Boundes—
Dorothy Osborne—Relics of Sacharissa... .. *Pages* 130—139

CHAPTER XIV

1653—1661

Algernon Sidney—*Julius Cæsar*—Lord and Lady Strangford—An
Exile's Letters... .. *Pages* 140—155

CHAPTER XV

1659—1663

Death of Lady Leicester—The Restoration—Lady Anne Cart—The Strangfords Pages 156—167

CHAPTER XVI

1663—1666

Lady Sunderland at Rufford—The Savile Brothers—Henry Savile's Letters—Robert, Lord Sunderland, and Anne, his Wife
Pages 168—180

CHAPTER XVII

1666—1670

Lady Sunderland's Accident—Robert, Lord Sunderland—Lord Halifax—Death of Lady Halifax—*Advice to a Daughter...* Pages 181—191

CHAPTER XVIII

1670—1680

Algernon Sidney in Exile—His Return to England—Death of Lord Leicester—Quarrels of the Sidney Brothers—William Penn—Portraits of Algernon Sidney Pages 192—204

CHAPTER XIX

1679

Lady Sunderland's Last Years—Her Character and Letters—Henry Sidney at the Hague—The Great Trimmer ... Pages 205—214

CHAPTER XX

1679—1680

Mr. Waller—The Court of Charles II.—Lord Sunderland Secretary of State—The Duchess of Portsmouth—Shaftesbury and Montague—Halifax retires to Rufford Pages 215—227

CHAPTER XXI

1680

Sunderland in Power—His Mother's Letters to Henry Sidney—The Leicester Trial—Lady Sunderland and Algernon Sidney
Pages 228—237

CHAPTER XXII

1680

Southampton Square—Mr. Pierpoint and Mrs. Pelham—Lady Sunderland's Letters on her Niece's Marriage Pages 238—249

CHAPTER XXIII

1680

Halifax at Rufford—Lady Sunderland's Letters—Her Son's Ambitious Designs—Anne, Lady Sunderland—The King's Illness
Pages 250—258

CHAPTER XXIV

1680

Lady Sunderland's Letters to Lord Halifax—Messages from her Son—Meeting at Althorp—Court Gossip—Henry Savile at Paris
Pages 259—268

CHAPTER XXV

1680

A French Heiress—Henry Savile's Letters—Court Intrigues and Party Cabals—Shaftesbury and Algernon Sidney Pages 269—279

CHAPTER XXVI

1680

Critical State of Affairs—Lady Sunderland's Anxieties—Letters to Halifax Pages 280—290

CHAPTER XXVII

1680

Halifax returns to Town—Henry Sidney's Diary—The Exclusion Bill—Attacks upon Halifax—Lady Sunderland's last Letters
Pages 291—300

CHAPTER XXVIII

1680—1684

Triumph of Halifax—Fall of Sunderland—The Ryehouse Plot—Death of Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney—Death of Dorothy, Lady Sunderland Pages 301—307

SACHARISSA

CHAPTER I

1500-1617

The Sidney Family—Grant of Penshurst—The Dudleys—Sir Philip Sidney—Barbara Gamage—Birth of Dorothy.

THE race from which Sacharissa sprang was as ancient and as illustrious as any in the kingdom. The virtues of the Sidneys had passed into a proverbial saying. Of them it might be said with truth, that all the men were brave and all the women pure. In olden days their home was in the pleasant land of Anjou, across the seas, and the first Sir William de Sidnei of whom we read in English history, came over with Henry II., and held the post of Chamberlain at his court. His descendants served with honour in the wars of the Plantagenet kings, and were rewarded with grants of estates in various parts of England. But the first to attain high distinction was Sir William Sidney, whose chivalrous feats, both in war and peace, won the favour of his royal master, Henry VIII. As a youth, he proved his valour against the Moors in Spain, and against the French at sea. At Flodden he led a wing of Surrey's army, and was dubbed a knight-banneret for his valour on the battle-field. Two years later he was one of the ten gentlemen sent to represent the King at the coronation of his sister Mary, Queen of France. Clad in green hoods and coats, their name and rank disguised, they entered the lists at the great tourney held at St. Denis, and there rode many courses for the honour of

England and St. George. Afterwards, Sir William accompanied Henry VIII. to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and both in the camp and tilting yard was one of that monarch's favourite comrades. At St. George's Feast, held at Windsor in 1541, he was made a Knight of the Garter. Before that, he had already been appointed chamberlain and tutor to the young Prince of Wales. Edward VI., indeed, grew up entirely in his charge and that of his wife, while their only son, Henry Sidney, was this prince's companion from his cradle. From this young king, only a year before his death, Sir William received the grant of the Manor of Penshurst, which has since then become so famous as the home of the Sidneys. A copy of the charter by which Edward VI. granted "the manor, park and palace of Penshurst, with the adjoining lands, meadows and pastures, woods and trees, to his well-beloved knight Sir William Sidney, in reward of services done to him in his father's lifetime," may still be seen in the British Museum. The gift which the short-lived King bestowed upon his old and trusty servant was a truly royal one. For Penshurst even in those days was one of the oldest and finest baronial halls in the kingdom. The park was of greater extent than it is now, the mansion itself had stood there before the coming of the Normans. For two centuries after the Conquest it had been the property of the De Penchesters, one of whom, Sir Stephen de Penchester, a knight of Edward I.'s time, lies buried in the church of Penshurst. At his death without heirs it passed to Sir John de Pulteney, who received the King's license to embattle, and who made Penshurst what it still remains—an almost perfect specimen of a feudal house in the reign of Edward III. He it was who built the grand old hall with its lofty timber roof and central hearth—the only one now remaining in England—its fine Kentish windows and fair minstrels' gallery. In his days, tradition says, the Black Prince and his beautiful young wife Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent, once spent Christmas at Penshurst, and saw the yule-log blazing on the huge fire-dogs on the open hearth, and heard the merry carols as the wassail bowl went round. But he too died without male heirs, and Penshurst passed to Sir John Devereux, constable of Dover and Warden of the

Cinque Ports under Richard II., who added a long wing to the house. After that it changed hands frequently, and was successively owned by John Duke of Bedford, Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, and his heirs. On the attainder of Edward Duke of Buckingham, in the reign of Henry VIII., Penshurst again reverted to the Crown, and was granted to Sir Ralph Fane. He in his turn forfeited his lands and lost his head for joining in the Duke of Somerset's rebellion. And so in 1552 the fine old Kentish mansion became the property of Sir William Sidney. There he retired to spend the last few months of his life, and dying in February 1553, was buried under a canopied tomb in Penshurst Church, being, as the inscription records, the "fyrste of his name who was Lorde of this Mannor."

Through his mother, a daughter of Sir William Brandon, and aunt of Charles Duke of Suffolk, Sir William Sidney traced his descent through Fitzalans and Warennes from the princely houses of Brabant and Flanders, which claimed kinship with kings and emperors, and were closely connected with the Conqueror's own family. His four daughters contracted alliances with some of the noblest houses in the land. One became the ancestress of the great families of Montagu, Hastings, and Noel. Another married Sir James Harrington, the ancestor of Lord Bolingbroke. The third became the wife of a FitzWilliam; and the fourth, named Frances, married Thomas Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, the representative of the ancient Earls of FitzWalter, and one of the best and wisest of Queen Elizabeth's servants. And a few months before Sir William's death at Penshurst, his only son, Sir Henry, made, in the eyes of his contemporaries, a still greater match by marrying the Lady Mary Dudley, eldest daughter of John, Earl of Warwick and Viscount de l'Isle, and soon afterwards Duke of Northumberland. In the end, Lady Mary became the sole representative of the Dudleys, and united in her person the great houses of De l'Isle, Grey, Berkeley, Beauchamp, and Talbot. So the bear and the ragged staff of the Dudleys took the place of the Sidney porcupine, and still figures on the cottages of Penshurst and in the arms of the present Lord De l'Isle.

Sir Philip Sidney we know counted it his greatest boast to be a Dudley: "Though in all truth I may justly affirm that I am by my father's side of ancient and always well-esteemed and well-matched gentry, yet I do acknowledge, I say, that my chiefest honour is to be a Dudley." And his father, Sir Henry, in the famous letter of advice which he wrote to Philip while still a boy at school, speaks in the same strain:

"Remember, my son, the noble blood you are descended of by your mother's side; and think that only by virtuous life and good action you may be an ornament to that illustrious family."

But at first this splendid alliance seemed destined to involve the Sidneys in the ruin which soon overtook the proud house of Northumberland. No one ever started in life under fairer auspices than young Henry Sidney. From his childhood he was brought up with Edward VI., who made him his constant companion, and many a time his bed-fellow. "At the young King's accession he was," writes Collins, "reputed for his virtues, fine composition of body, gallantry and liveliness of spirit, the most pleasant young gentleman in the court. And for the singular love and entire affection that virtuous and learned prince had ever shown him, he was made one of the four principal gentlemen of his privy-chamber. And such delight had he in his modest and ingenuous conversation and company as he rarely gave him leave to be absent from him."

And Sir Henry himself writes: "I was, by that most famous king, Henry VIII., put to his sweet son, Prince Edward, my most dear master, prince and sovereign, my near kinswoman being his only nurse, my father being his chamberlain, my mother his governess, my aunt in such place as among meaner personages is called a dry nurse; for from the time he left sucking, she continually lay in bed with him, so long as he remained in women's government. As the prince grew in years and discretion, so grew I in favour and liking of him."

Before he was twenty-one years of age, he was knighted and sent abroad on diplomatic missions. On his return, new honours were heaped upon him. A brilliant career seemed to open before him. But on the 7th of July, 1553, the poor

young King died in his arms at Greenwich, and the whole aspect of affairs was suddenly altered. Fortunately for himself and his family, Sir Henry took no part in the attempt of his father-in-law to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne. He prudently retired to Penshurst, where he remained during the stormy period which followed. But it was a sad time for his young wife. One by one in these anxious months she saw her father, brother, and sister-in-law die on the scaffold, while another brother, John Earl of Warwick, was only released from the Tower to die at Penshurst before the year was over.

Queen Mary, however, confirmed Sir Henry in the offices which he had held under her brother, and sent him to Ireland two years later with his brother-in-law, Lord Sussex, as Vice-Treasurer, and afterwards as Lord Justice. In 1558 Queen Elizabeth appointed him Lord President of Wales, and a few years later advanced him to the full rank of Lord Deputy of Ireland. For thirteen years this faithful servant laboured to maintain order and execute justice among this turbulent and disaffected people. The task was not an easy one, and we hear amusing accounts of his vain endeavours to civilize the wild Irish chiefs and reclaim them to civility, comeliness in habit, and cleanliness in diet and lodging, when they came to visit him at the Castle of Dublin. In after days he was remembered gratefully as one who administered justice impartially, and who never stooped to enrich himself at the public expense. But loyal and active as Sir Henry proved in the discharge of his duties, he was too blunt and honest a man to please his royal mistress, and when in 1571 he returned to England, broken in health and impoverished in fortune, it was to find the Queen's mind had been poisoned by slanders in his absence. She gave him a cold reception, refused to pay the debts he had contracted in her service, and removed him from his office of Lord Deputy. By way of compensation she offered him a peerage which he was too poor to accept, and sick in mind and body, he withdrew to Ludlow Castle, where he continued in his office of Lord President of Wales until his death in 1586. His wife, the gentle Lady Mary Sidney, who had herself sacrificed health

and strength in the service of her exacting mistress, and had borne losses and poverty with the same serene temper, followed him to the grave within three months' time.

At least the sorely-trying pair had the consolation of living to see their son attain a position and enjoy a renown altogether unique in history. That son was Sir Philip Sidney.

The story of his brief life is too well known to need more than a few words here. Born at Penshurst in the same year that Lady Jane Grey and her husband died on the scaffold, and named Philip in compliment to the Queen's consort, Philip II. of Spain, he early gave signs of the serious character and admirable virtues which made him the ideal knight of his generation. No parents ever gave a son more wise and tender counsels, none ever saw their fondest hopes more completely realized in that son. After three years of foreign travel he appeared at Court, where his beauty of person and accomplishments, and the protection of his powerful uncle Leicester, soon brought him into notice. The handsome and cultured youth rose high in the favour of the Queen, who honoured him with repeated tokens of her goodwill, and called him the choicest jewel of her crown. He was employed on foreign missions, and consulted by leading statesmen on public affairs. But the dazzling glare of court life did not draw him away from the graver studies which he loved, and when his independence of action lost him the Queen's favour, he retired to his sister's home at Wilton and wrote the *Arcadia*. In his own family he was always tender and affectionate, full of thoughtful love and consideration for his parents in their difficulties, and ever ready to lend them a helping hand. He writes long letters full of wise counsel to his younger brother Robert Sidney, and sends him supplies of money on his travels, with the kindly words: "For the money you have received, assure yourself, for it is true there is nothing I spend so pleaseth me as that which is for you. Use it to your best profit. . . If ever I have ability you will find it; if not, yet shall not any brother living be better beloved than you of me." And it is touching to find the brave old father exhorting this same Robert to follow in the steps of his brother. "Imitate his virtues, exercises, studies

and actions. He is the rare ornament of this age, the very formula that all well-disposed young gentlemen of our Court do form also their manners and life by. In truth I speak it without flattery of him or myself; he hath the most rare virtues that ever I found in any way. Once again I say, imitate him."

Philip's romantic passion for the youthful Penelope Devereux, in whose honour he wrote the beautiful love-songs of *Astrophel* and *Stella*, was crossed by her marriage to another and very worthy husband. But in 1583 he was knighted by the Queen, and the same year he married Frances, the daughter of one of his oldest friends, Sir Francis Walsingham. When the war with Spain broke out, he was appointed Governor of Flushing, and in 1585 left England never to return. His father's death in the following spring made him Lord of Penshurst, but a few months later, at the battle of Zutphen, he received the fatal wound of which he died.

Since Sir Philip Sidney only left an infant daughter Elizabeth, afterwards Countess of Rutland, the estates of Penshurst passed, at his death, to his brother Robert. Born in 1563, he was nine years younger than Philip. He had accompanied him to the Netherlands, and wept bitterly to see him die. To him the hero's last words were spoken. "Love my memory, cherish my friends; their faith to me may assure you they are honest. But above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator, in me beholding the end of this world with all her vanities."

A week before the sad event, Robert Sidney had been knighted by his uncle Leicester for his valour on the battlefield, and he lived to win fresh laurels and rise to high honours. Two years afterwards he was appointed Governor of Flushing, and held that office until the town was given up to the States of Holland in 1616. At the same time he was sent on embassies to France and Scotland, and again saw active service, when, in 1597, an English expedition was sent to the help of Prince Maurice of Nassau against the Spanish forces. His intimate friendship with Lord Essex, who served with him in Holland, and soon afterwards married Sir Philip Sidney's widow, aroused the Queen's displeasure, but he was

too honest and loyal to join in his intrigues, and escaped the ruin which overtook that luckless favourite. On James I.'s accession he was created Baron Sidney of Penshurst, and three years afterwards Viscount de l'Isle, in virtue of his descent from that ancient family, of whom he became the sole representative on the death of his niece, the Countess of Rutland, without issue. He also held the office of Lord Chamberlain to Queen Anne of Denmark, and was sent to conduct the Princess Elizabeth to Heidelberg on her marriage to the Elector Palatine. When Flushing was surrendered to the Dutch, he was rewarded for his services as Governor with the order of the Garter, and in 1618 advanced to the dignity of Earl of Leicester. During his father's residence at Ludlow Castle as Lord President of Wales, Robert Sidney had married a Welsh heiress, Barbara Gamage, whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror, and owned vast estates in Glamorganshire. The prize was not won without a struggle, for Mistress Barbara was a beautiful and refined maiden, as well as the greatest heiress of her day. Her hand was eagerly sought after by many gentlemen of note, one of whom, young Herbert Crofts, had influential friends at court, and already considered himself an accepted suitor. On the other hand, Robert Sidney's suit was pressed by his brother-in-law, Lord Pembroke, the most powerful noble in Wales, and by Sir Philip's father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham. So the strife waxed hot, and Sir Edward Stradley, the guardian of the orphan heiress, in whose house, St. Donatt's Castle, she lived, had a hard task to choose between the suitors for his fair cousin's hand. Suddenly he received a peremptory command from the Queen herself, desiring him to bring the lady to Court at once, and place her in the Lord Chamberlain's charge.

"Her Majesty," wrote Sir Walter Raleigh, himself a kinsman of Mistress Barbara, "hath now thrice caused letters to be written unto you that you suffer not my kinswoman to be bought and sold without Her Majesty's privilege to the consent and the advice of my Lord Chamberlain and myselfe, her father's cousin-germayne, considering she hath

not any nearer kin nor better. I doubt not but that all other persuasion sett aparte, you will satisfie Her Highness, and withal do us that courtesie as to acquaint us with her matchinge.

“Your most willinge friend,
“W. RALEIGH.”

But two hour's before the Queen's messenger reached St. Donatt's Castle, Robert Sidney and Barbara Gamage had been made man and wife, and no royal command could put them asunder. All the revenge which the blustering of young Master Crofts and the other disappointed suitors could obtain, was an order from Lord Burghley to surrender the lady, her house and lands, to the Queen's custody, to be detained at the royal pleasure. But since the heiress was of full age at the time of her marriage, the Crown had no jurisdiction over her as a ward. The threat, therefore, was probably ineffectual, and the Queen soon forgave the brother of her favourite. The bride whom young Robert Sidney had wooed so boldly proved a treasure worthy of his pains. She made him an admirable wife, and her domestic virtues were extolled by Ben Jonson, who in his address to Penshurst describes a sudden visit paid there by James I. and his Queen. Although totally unprepared for the honour thus paid her husband, and although she herself, it appears, was absent at the time, all was in readiness.

“Her linen, plate, and all things right
Though she was far ; and every room was drest
As if she had expected such a guest.”

After celebrating the beauties of Penshurst and the well-deserved popularity enjoyed by the owners in the country, Ben Jonson goes on to praise his hostess in the following lines,—

“These, Penshurst, are thy praise, and yet not all,—
The lady's noble, fruitful, chaste withal,”—

and alludes to the large family, four sons and eight daughters, which had been the offspring of the marriage. Of these, however, several died in infancy, and only one son

survived his father. The eldest daughter, Lady Mary, married Sir Robert Wroth; the second, Lady Katharine, became the wife of Sir Louis Mansel; the fourth, named Philip after her lamented uncle; and the seventh, Barbara, was married in 1622 to Sir Thomas Smythe, soon afterwards created Viscount Strangford, and one of the richest owners in Kent. This young peer, whose family became closely connected with the Sidneys, was the grandson of one of Queen Elizabeth's ablest and most trusty servants, Thomas Smythe, for many years Farmer of the Customs, and generally known as the Great Customer.

The only son who grew up to manhood and outlived his father, was Robert, second Earl of Leicester, and father of Lady Dorothy Sidney. He was born on the 1st of December, 1595, at Baynard's Castle, that ancient house in the city precincts, which after being a royal palace for many years, was now the property of Lord Leicester's brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke. His father was at his post at Flushing when his steward, Rowland White, wrote to inform him that his lady had been brought to bed of a goodly fat son. Both the mother and child were ill of the measles, and the poor lady was much afflicted of her husband's absence, yet the child cried as strongly as any child could do, so that great hopes of his living were entertained. On New Year's Day he was christened, his sponsors, we notice with interest, being Lord Compton, Sir Philip Sidney's old love Stella, now Lady Rich, and Lord Mountjoy, whom a few years later she married, after her divorce from her first husband, while Sir Philip's widow, now the wife of Lord Essex, was also present. A strange combination truly! Nevertheless the boy prospered, and rewarded the anxious care bestowed upon him from his infancy. Lord Leicester was as good a father as Sir Henry Sidney had been before him, and liked to hear the most minute particulars about his children in his absence. Mrs. Mary and Mrs. Katharine, he is informed, do much profit by their books. Mr. William dances a galliard in his doublet and hose, and Mr. Philip can go alone. And again, at Friday's dinner, my old Lady FitzWilliam comes to Baynard's Castle, where she is made very welcome, and sees Mr. William dance

and lead the measure with Mrs. Mary and Mrs. Kate. And the old lady, their great-aunt, is pleased to take great pleasure in the sight of the children, and wishes their father were here. Poor Lady Essex, too, is another visitor who comes to Baynard's Castle to see my lady and the children, while her lord is lying a close prisoner under the heavy cross of Her Majesty's displeasure. "To see her clad as she was was a pitiful spectacle. She is an humble suitor to the Queen that she may live with him and his keeper be removed. It is not yet granted, and a poor hope that it may be obtained."

Another time Rowland White writes from Penshurst, and remarks on the occasion which has brought him there, which is Mistress Mary's birthday.

"My lady," he observes, "takes great pleasure in this place, and surely I never saw a sweeter. All things finely prospering about it; the garden is well kept, and the gardener much troubled to hear that he is to lose it!"

And then the honest servant goes off to court, and carefully reports the Queen's sayings and doings for his master's benefit: how she walks out in the park, and is gracious of speeches to this lord or that lady, and how she dances in the masque at Lord Herbert's and Mrs. Ann Russell's wedding. "After supper the masques came in, and delicate it was to see eight ladies so prettily and richly attired. Mrs. Fitton led, and after they had done all their own ceremonies, these eight ladies chose eight ladies more to dance the measure. Mrs. Fitton went to the Queen, and wooed her to dance. Her Majesty asked what she was. '*Affection*,' she said. '*Affection!*' said the Queen. '*Affection* is false!' Yet her Majesty rose and danced!"

There is a great deal in Rowland White's letters about little Mr. Robert, who is clearly the flower of the flock. He is a born courtier at five years old. His pretty ways are the delight of the Court when he is taken to Windsor, at St. George's Feast, and brought into the royal presence. "I brought up Mr. Robert when the Knights were at dinner," writes honest Rowland White to his master at Flushing, "who played the wag so prettily and boldly that all took pleasure in him, but above the rest my Lord Admiral, who gave

him sweetmeats, and he prated with his Honour beyond measure."

The next we hear of Mr. Robert is from Oxford, where he is engaged with his studies at the University, and wins golden opinions from his tutor by his devotion to his books and aptness to learn.

On leaving Oxford the young man was given a company in his father's regiment at Flushing, and in 1616 he was made a Knight of the Bath, at the creation of Charles, Prince of Wales. About the same time we find his father, as yet Viscount Lisle, entering into negotiations with Lady Northumberland for his son's marriage with her eldest daughter, Lady Dorothy Percy. Both Lady Dorothy and her sister Lucy, afterwards Countess of Carlisle, were remarkable for their beauty and wit; and if Lord Lisle showed some hesitation in concluding the marriage treaty, it was because their father, Lord Northumberland, was still a prisoner in the Tower, where he had lain for many years, on suspicion of being implicated in the Gunpowder Plot. His fortune, too, had been heavily impaired by the enormous fine levied on his estates, and Lord Lisle, with his large family, might well look on the marriage with some misgiving, and prefer to seek a more richly endowed wife for his son. But young Sidney was genuinely attached to Lady Dorothy, and his friends urged his father to consent to the marriage. "Lady Northumberland," wrote Francis Carew, "takes it very unkindly that your lordship should entertain proposals in a far meaner place, and *that*, she hears, with great forwardness," and gives it as his own opinion, that he "knows not where the young man should have matched so happily." Whether his representations had any effect or not, before the year was out Sir Robert Sidney and Dorothy Percy were wedded, for in October of the following year their first child, Dorothy Sidney, was born at Sion House.

CHAPTER II

1617—1630

Dorothy's Parents—Penshurst—Arcadia—Family Traditions.

THE exact date and place of Dorothy Sidney's birth has puzzled many of Waller's critics. His first editor, Fenton, searched the registers of Penshurst in vain to discover the secret. Later writers have made various guesses at her age with more or less approach to truth. As a matter of fact, she was born at Sion House, and baptized at Isleworth on the 5th of October, 1617. Her grandfather, Lord Northumberland, the friend and companion of Raleigh in his long captivity, was still a prisoner in the Tower, and was only released two years afterwards through the influence of James I.'s favourite, Lord Doncaster, who in 1617 married his younger daughter, Lady Lucy Percy, the famous Countess of Carlisle. At the time of Dorothy's birth her father still retained his post as Colonel of a regiment quartered at Flushing, in the service of the Prince of Orange. He remained in the army for some years longer, while his wife and young children spent their time with her parents at Petworth, or with Lord and Lady Leicester at Penshurst. But his father was desirous he should resign his post and retire to live with him and his family at Penshurst. Accordingly we find him writing in this vein from his nephew, Lord Pembroke's house, Baynard's Castle, to his son in the camp at Cleveland in the Low Countries.

“SONNE,—In speaking yesternight with my lorde of Pembroke, I tolde him that I did, ere long, expect your being here, and that I did not desire that you should make your

residence with your charge there, your means of your own being so small, and my estate such as I am not able to supply you; and to live upon your own means there were not possible, but an occasion to bring you into extreame debts. He answered presently that if you would part with your regiment he thought my lord of Oxford would deal with you for it. I desired him to stay till I speak with him again, a little to think of the best way in it, and not knowing how you may be engaged to my Lord of Essex. But this night I am to meet him at supper, and then I will desire him to do it, but not from you but as from myself, because the leaving of the warrs, in these countreys, shall seem to come from me, not from you; and I may justly, for it is true that I desire you at home, both in respect of mine yeares and mine inabilities to maintain you there. But I am weary of writing, and you, I believe, of reading. God send you safe and soon home unto your most loving father,

“LEICESTER.”

A year later the old Earl lost his faithful wife. She died in May 1621, thirty-seven years after the hurried marriage in the Welsh castle, which had roused such a storm at Queen Elizabeth's Court. Their union had been singularly happy, and to the last Barbara Gamage showed herself an admirable helpmate. A letter which her husband addressed to her, four years before her death, gives a pleasant idea of the relations existing between them. Lord Lisle, as he then was, had just been informed that his newly-married daughter-in-law's sister, Lady Lucy Percy, and her affianced husband, Lord Hay, intended to pay a sudden visit to Penshurst. So he wrote off at once, in considerable perturbation, to his wife, to inform her of these unexpected guests' arrival.

“SWEET HART,—Yesterday I dined with my Lord Hay at his house by Sion, and there he told me, which I had not heard afore, that my Lady Lucy had sent word that she would be at Penshurst on Tuesday, and my Lord Hay thought to be there, and that you did expect them. This sudden going of theirs cannot be put off, seeing it is their own choice. What company goes with my Lady Lucy I know not. I

heard by some of my own servants, who heard it at my Lord Hay's, that Mrs. Isabella Rich goes with her, and some speech there was of my Lady Carew's going, but that is uncertain. This night I sup and dine at my Lord Hay's, where I shall know what they resolve on; and to-morrow morning, God willing, I will be at London, where I have not been since I saw you. On Tuesday, God willing, I will be with you, but am not sure yet whether I will come along with my Lord Hay or be there afore him. I believe he will look I should accompany him. I will bring my plate with me, as I told you, and my cook and my gentlemen. Other company I do not propose to bring, if it be not Sir John Packenham. If you will have anything from London, send me word by to-morrow night, and I will provide it. Give my blessing, I pray you, to my children, and God protect you from all harm.

“Your most loving husband,

“R. LISLE.

“At Otelands, the 27th of July, 1617. To my most dear wife, the Lady Viscountess Lisle.”

Lord Hay was married to Lady Lucy Percy in the following November. The King himself honoured the wedding-supper with his presence, and soon afterwards made his favourite Viscount Doncaster, and a few years later Earl of Carlisle. But although thus closely connected with the Sidneys, James I.'s minion was never on cordial terms with his wife's relatives. The character which Clarendon gives of him shows how little his conduct was likely to commend itself to his grave and virtuous brother-in-law. “He had no bowels in the point of running in debt, or borrowing all he could; and after having spent, in a very jovial life, above £400,000, which upon a strict computation he received from the Crown, he left not a house nor acre of land to be remembered by.” We do not wonder that Robert Sidney desired only an outward familiarity with this unworthy nobleman, and had no ambition to be his bosom friend. On one occasion, indeed, when the two sisters and their husbands met at Petworth in 1620, Lord Doncaster's vanity and insolence were so insuffer-

able that Lord Lisle was actually provoked to strike him, and the two angry lords were parted with difficulty. For some years after this untoward event they were not on speaking terms, and Lord Lisle thought it necessary to leave on record a full and particular account of the quarrel, and of the circumstances which justified his action. A year or two later his cousin, William Lord Pembroke, had a similar quarrel with Lord Carlisle, as he had then become, and we find Lord Lisle offering him his services if he should have occasion to draw swords in defence of his honour. This young nobleman, the son of Sir Philip Sidney's beloved sister, the friend and patron of Shakespeare, whom Clarendon calls the most invariably beloved and esteemed of any man of the age, was much attached to all his mother's family. He assures this his very dear kinsman that he holds the first place in his estimation, that there is no one else in whose faithful love and friendship he puts such perfect confidence. He is also constantly mentioned in affectionate terms by his uncle, Lord Leicester, who for many years, as we have seen, had rooms in his nephew's house, Baynard's Castle, for his family as well as himself. But the old Earl was too wise a man to wish to keep up the feud. "I know it can be no good to you," he wrote to his son, to "continue in a quarrel." And he did his best, not altogether successfully, to heal the breach.

Old age and infirmities were now rapidly gaining ground on Lord Leicester, and his son's presence became daily more necessary to him. But active service still kept the young man at his post. In September 1621 his father writes to him again from Baynard's Castle. "If there be such weather in Cleveland as is here, more rain falling than I have almost known at this time of year, I believe both armies will be weary of their lodging, neither can I blame you if you have been weary, for I know of olde what it is to lie in a colde and dirty quarter. But I think Rayley will bring worde that at last you have changed your lodgings; if not broken up for good and all."

This letter is of special interest in containing the first mention of his grandchildren Dorothy and Philip, her eldest brother. Lord Leicester enclosed a letter from his daughter-

in-law to her husband, and remarks that he has heard from her again yesterday. "I thank God she is very well, having now taken her chamber, where she doth expect a happy hour; and so was Doll and Philip." The child whose birth was hourly expected was Algernon Sidney, who was born in November 1621, at Penshurst.¹ In the same letter he alludes to the death of his sister Mary, Lady Pembroke, who had just breathed her last in her son's house. "Touching the funeral of my noble sister, the resolution is taken that she shall be sent down to Salisbury privately, yet in a decent sort, there to be laid by her husband, and a funeral made here in Paul's, according to her quality, which I think cannot be performed till a week after All Hallowtide."

Before long, however, Lord Lisle obtained leave to resign his commission, and he and his wife came to live at Penshurst during the last years of the old Earl's life. From there we find Lord Leicester writing to the King, who had been paying Lord Pembroke a visit at Wilton, to be excused attendance at the Chapter of the Knights of the Garter, and making application for arrears of pay that were due to him. Like his father before him, he had found his services were but poorly paid, and complains repeatedly of the pressure of his debts and his inability to meet the many claims upon him. But in spite of these difficulties, in spite too of the gout and stone which afflicted him, Lord Leicester, at sixty-three years of age, suddenly took to himself a second wife. The lady whom to every one's surprise he married, in the spring of 1626, was a near neighbour and old friend, Sarah Blount, the

¹ There can be little doubt that Algernon Sidney is the child whose baptism is recorded in the registers of Penshurst under the date of November 3, 1621. He is there called Henry, but since no mention of a boy of that name appears later, and his death is not recorded with that of his infant brothers and sisters, we can only conclude that the name was incorrectly given, or else afterwards altered to that of Algernon. The registers give the baptism of an infant son of Lord Lisle's, Robert, born October 9, 1620, and buried July 16, 1622, as well as that of a daughter, Lucy, baptized on March 7, 1623. When we consider these dates, we shall see that it is impossible for Algernon's birth to have taken place, as has been sometimes supposed, in 1622. And Algernon Sidney himself writes, in April, 1661, that he "is growing very near forty," a remark which points to the same conclusion.

widow of Sir Thomas Smythe of Boundes Park, in the parish of Bidborough, close to Penshurst. The Smythes were already connected by marriage with the Sidneys. Only four years before Lord Leicester's youngest daughter, Lady Barbara, had become the wife of the young Lord Strangford, Sir Thomas Smythe's nephew. And Dame Sarah's only son had, curiously enough, lately married the Lady Isabella Rich, who had accompanied Lady Lucy Percy to Penshurst in 1617, and who was the daughter of Penelope Devereux, Sir Philip Sidney's adored Stella. Immediately after his marriage Lord Leicester and his Countess moved to town, and were at Baynard's Castle that June, intending, no doubt, to pay their respects to the new king, Charles I., and his French queen. But a week or two later death suddenly put an end to his career. On the 16th of July the fine old man was laid with his fathers in the family vault at Penshurst. His wife did not long survive him. At the time of her lord's death she was ailing, and a fortnight later Rowland White, "Your lordship's ancient servant," as he might well style himself, wrote to the new Earl informing him that her ladyship had made her will and left legacies to himself and his lady and his numerous sisters, "since if she fall away as she has done these last days, she will not stay long after my lord your father."

Robert, Lord Lisle, who now succeeded to his father's honours and estates, was thirty years of age when he became the second Earl of Leicester. He had already four children, besides an infant daughter who died soon after her birth, and two months after his father's death his third son was born at Penshurst and received the name of Robert. During the next ten years Lady Leicester gave birth to six more daughters, whose baptisms are duly recorded in the parish registers. This large and rapidly-increasing family was a heavy charge for estates already burdened, but Lord and Lady Leicester were the most careful and prudent of parents. During the next ten years they lived quietly at Penshurst, seldom appearing at Court, and devoting themselves entirely to the care of their children and property.

In this beautiful home, Dorothy Sidney's childhood and

youth were spent. A fairer spot would have been hard to find. All that is best and loveliest in English scenery, green lawns and sunny terraces, noble avenues and running waters, seem brought together round the stately old pile. The Sidneys themselves were proud, as they well might be, of their ancestral seat, and loved every stone of its ancient walls. The good old steward only echoed the sentiment of his masters when he said that a sweeter place was never seen. Barbara Gamage and Dorothy Percy both took greater delight in its rural beauties than in the lordly homes from which they came. Sir Henry Sidney sighed amid all the hardships and labours of his Irish campaigns for the sweets of his Kentish home; his great-grandson Algernon, in his villa at Frascati, surrounded as he was by the loveliness of Italian summer, still yearned above all things for a sight of fair Penshurst. When Sir Philip Sidney dreams of Arcady it is the old home in the Kentish Weald which rises before his eyes.

“There were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees, humble valleys whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets which being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so too by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds. The house itself was built of fair and strong stone, not affecting so much any extraordinary kind of fineness, as an honourable representing of a firm stateliness. The back-side of the house was neither field, garden, nor orchard—or rather it was both field, garden, and orchard; for as soon as the descending of the stairs had delivered them down, they came into a place cunningly set with trees of the most taste-pleasing fruits, but scarcely had they taken that into consideration, but that they were suddenly stepped into a delicate green; of each side of the green a thicket, and behind the thicket again were beds of flowers.”

This same impression of firm stateliness and homely comfort rather than any display of splendid show, makes itself felt in Ben Jonson's description of Penshurst.

“Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
 Of touch ¹ or marble, nor canst boast of row
 Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold ;
 Thou hast no lantern, whereof tales are told,
 Or stair or courts ; but stand'st an ancient pile ;
 And these, grudged at, are revered the while.
 Thou joy'st in better marks of soil, of air,
 Of wood, of water ; therein thou art fair.”

He goes on to describe the beauty of the grounds and the abundance of game in the forest, the deer of the park, the partridges in the field, and the carp in the fish-ponds, and above all the wealth of ripe fruit in the orchards for which Penshurst was always famous.

“Thou hast thy walks for health as well as sport ;
 Thy mount, to which thy dryads do resort,
 Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,
 Beneath the broad beech and the chestnut shade.
 Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
 Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours.
 The early cherry with the later plum,
 Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come ;
 The blushing apricot and woolly peach
 Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.”

As we read these lines, we realise how little the old place has changed with years. Ages have rolled by, but the Penshurst of the present time is still the Penshurst of Ben Jonson and of the *Arcadia*. To-day, as in the days when Dorothy Sidney was young, it remains the perfect picture of an old-world home. The gray walls were already old then. The lapse of centuries has only tinged them with a deeper hue, and left a few more weather-stains in their ancient stones. The velvet lawns, the broad terraces with their high yew hedges and brilliant flowers, the rows of blossoming fruit trees are still there. The tall beeches and limes still grow thick round the majestic pile, the spreading branches of oaks and elms, the sloping sward, the wooded hills, and bright river are all the same as they were then. The old timbered cottages and gabled roofs at the park gates, the church with its pinnacled tower and picturesque lych-gate, go

¹ A sumptuous marble.

back far beyond Tudor days. The house itself, of course, has undergone some changes in modern times. A few rooms have been dismantled, others have been altered. The chapel which stood near the hall in Elizabethan times has been removed to make room for a staircase, and a new wing has been added. But the main part of the building remains the same. The grand old baronial hall is still a perfect example of its kind. The transomed windows, the doors and wainscoting of split oak, the open hearth and massive timbers blackened with smoke, all bear witness to its great age. The raised dais at one end, the minstrel's gallery, the finely-panelled screen below, with its doors leading to the several offices, all are parts of the primitive arrangements of feudal times. The walls are hung with old suits of armour. A helmet of Sir William Sidney's, the hero of Flodden Field, bearing a wooden porcupine, the old Sidney crest, hangs side by side with Robert Dudley's double-handed sword, and a bell in the outer court is inscribed with the name of Elizabeth's favourite. A stone flight of stairs with a handsome fretted roof leads up to the Solar or chief parlour above, and the narrow loophole is still preserved, through which the lord of the house could look down on his retainers in the hall below. The state rooms beyond remain unchanged. Queen Elizabeth occupied them when she paid a visit to Sir Henry Sidney, on one of her progresses through Kent, and a card-table, embroidered in delicate floral patterns, is said to have been the work of her royal hands. As we pace the vaulted chambers and long galleries, the furniture and fittings of Tudor days meet our eyes. Chairs and tables of carved ebony, silver hanging lamps and jewelled cups, rich tapestries and gorgeous brocades, exquisitely wrought needlework, treasures of rare porcelain, are stored up here. The Venetian glass chandeliers were a gift from Queen Elizabeth to Robert Dudley, the Dutch cabinets of carved oak, adorned with paintings by Pieters, are recollections of the visit paid to Penshurst by King James and his queen, and commemorated by Ben Jonson's poem. Nothing seems changed since then. In one corner we see a spinet of Spanish workmanship, elaborately ornamented with gold

medallions of the Cæsars, in another the mandoline on which Lady Mary Sidney played. Music we know was a favourite pastime of the Sidneys. Sir Philip, who could not play himself, is never tired of urging his brother "to keep up his music." "You will not believe," he writes, "what a want I find of it in my melancholy times." And Dorothy and her sisters, who were skilled in every accomplishment proper for gentlewomen of the day, both sang and played the lute.

From the walls the same pictures look down, kings and queens of Tudor and Stuart race, Sidneys of every generation and their kinsfolk, Dudleys and Herberts, Percies and Cecils, they are all here. The gentle young King whom Sir Henry remembered so tenderly as his sweet master, and his royal sisters, Mary with her Spanish husband who gave his name to the most illustrious of all the Sidneys, Elizabeth in the act of dancing before her favourite. Poor Lady Jane Grey, too, with her brown eyes and fair young face set in a Marie Stuart cap; and all the ill-fated family to whose ambitious dreams she fell a victim. Leicester himself is there, stalwart in form and vigorous in action, but scarcely the polished courtier we should have expected to see. His coarser type of countenance and high colour form a marked contrast to the oval faces and refined features of the Sidneys, all of whom have the same dark eyes and brown hair, with the dash of red or amber of which Aubrey speaks. Sir Henry's handsome face and soldier-like air remind us of the days when he was reckoned the most complete gentleman of young King Edward's Court. His son Philip appears at several different stages of his life. First as a boy in court dress and silk stockings, with his hand on the hilt of his sword, and his arm clasped round that of his young brother, the "sweet Robin" of his letters. Afterwards in the flower of his early manhood, as we see him in the still finer portrait of Warwick Castle, the very mirror of chivalry, but always with the same serious eyes and thoughtful air, to remind us that we have in him not only the gallant knight and finished courtier, but the scholar and the poet, the friend of Languet and the author of the *Arcadia*. His faithful companion and correspondent, the wise and learned Huguenot, Hubert

Languet, is there too, in black velvet suit and lace ruffles, painted no doubt for the young Englishman he loved so well, and whose career he followed with such unceasing interest. Languet himself, we know, journeyed to England in the winter of 1579, when he was already old, for the sake of seeing Philip once more, and probably visited his home at Penshurst. And the ladies of the Sidney family, those women who were as famous for their beauty and their culture as the men, we find them all here. Not one is missing. Lady Mary looks down upon us, in the early days of her married life, when she came to Penshurst as a bride of high degree, before she caught the small-pox in nursing her royal mistress, and lost beauty and health alike in the service of that not over-grateful lady. She is painted in full court dress, and holds her mandoline in her hand. The face is gentle and refined, touched with melancholy, and more like her son in feature and expression than either of her brothers.

This was the mother to whose wise counsel and tender thoughtfulness he owed so much. "For mine own part," he wrote to his father, "I have had only light from her."

Barbara Gamage is here too, not as the winsome lady whom young Robert Sidney bore off in triumph as his bride from a host of rival suitors, but in her more advanced years, as the matron whose housewifely virtues Ben Jonson praised. But her face is still fair and her eyes are bright; a very goodly lady as we see her, in her white satin robes, enormous hoop, and ruff, surrounded by the olive branches of her house; four daughters and two young sons, all in the same quaint white skirts and ruffs. One of these little fellows grew up to become the second Earl of Leicester, the father of Dorothy Sidney. And there is Lady Frances Sidney, Sir Henry's youngest sister, who married the great Lord Sussex, and after her husband's death endowed Sidney-Sussex College at Cambridge, where the porcupine of the Sidneys still figures together with the FitzWalter and Sussex arms. A very learned and virtuous lady, we are told, whose abundant charities were not forgotten at Penshurst, and who caused her arms to be emblazoned for perpetual remembrance in the church close by. But among all these fair and high-born

ladies there would be none, in the eyes of her own family, who could compare with Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, the lady of Ben Jonson's immortal epitaph—

“ Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death, ere thou dost claim another,
Learned and fair and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.”

This was the “ noble sister ” whom Sir Philip loved with such devoted affection, the closest friend and companion of his youth, who shared all his tastes and helped him in all his highest endeavours. Lady Pembroke it was with whom he lived in his retreat at Wilton, who translated the Psalms with him into lyrical metres, and to whom he dedicated the *Arcadia*, inspired, as he tells us, by her wish, which was to him an absolute command. She herself was a poet of no mean order, and her touching elegy on the death of her lamented brother deserves to rank with the best verse of the day. Aubrey alludes to the striking resemblance of feature between the brother and sister, and the poet Spenser describes Lady Pembroke as

“ The gentlest shepherdess that lives this day,
And most resembling both in shape and spright,
Her brother dear.”

This likeness is strongly marked in the Penshurst portrait, a very charming half-length of this fascinating lady in a black velvet gown, with lace ruffles at her throat and wrists, and pearl necklace and earrings. But her eyes are blue, and her locks are fairer than Philip's. On the whole perhaps she bears more resemblance to her mother's family than to the Sidneys. Lady Pembroke survived her husband upwards of twenty years, and died at Baynard's Castle in 1621. Her brother, Lord Leicester, had the deepest affection for this his only sister, and since he spent so much of his time in town at her house, and Dorothy was four years old at the time of her death, she may have seen her great-aunt in her early childhood. In any case, the memory of this accomplished lady would be fresh in the mind of her parents, and her

example would be held up to the children of the rising generation as a model of virtue and excellence.

That of Sir Philip we know was fondly cherished by his nephew and all his descendants. These realized to the full the deep impression which his brief and brilliant career had made on the age, and the undying lustre which he had shed on the name of Sidney. In these scenes of his youth his memory could not die. The oak tree which had been planted on the edge of Lancup pond, the day that he was born, and which was still standing in the last century, was an object of reverence. Already Ben Jonson had sung its fame.

“That taller tree which of a nut was set
At his great birth where all the Muses met.”

And ere long that other poet, who sang of Sacharissa's charms, was to give it a place in his verse. A lock of his hair, carefully brought home by his brother from Zutphen, is preserved among the most precious treasures at Penshurst, and still keeps the bright ruddy brown hue it wore when he was alive. His words and deeds were handed down as a sacred possession from father to son. Robert, the second Lord Leicester, knew his *Arcadia* as well as his Bible, and quotes both books constantly in his letters. In his eyes, as in those of all his family, Philip was the hero and ornament of their race, as his father, Sir Henry, had called him, *Lumen familiæ suæ*.

CHAPTER III

1617—1634

Childhood and Youth—Lady Leicester—Mr. Waller's Courtship—*Song to the Rose.*

SUCH then was the home in which Dorothy Sidney grew up. A home full of great traditions, of memories reaching far back into the history of by-gone ages, of lives rendered illustrious by heroic deeds. But splendid as these traditions were, and glorious as the actions of her ancestors had been, these fair and noble presences about her spoke of better things than worldly success and rewards. For these men and women life had been no flower-grown road, but a hard and thorny path. Of troubles and pain they had each of them had their full share. But they had borne themselves well in the fray, and had left behind them an example of high resolve and patient endurance. *Noblesse oblige* might well be the motto of the Sidneys. The remembrance of the blood which flowed in their veins was constantly used by them as a spur to generous action, and no higher ideal of conduct could be set before a boy of promise than the letter which Sir Henry had written to his young son Philip, while still at his first school.

“Since this is my first letter that ever I did write to you, I will not that it be all empty of some advices, which my natural care for you provoketh me to wish you to follow, as documents to you in this your tender age. Let your first action be the lifting up of your mind to Almighty God by hearty prayer; and feelingly digest the words you speak in prayer, with continual meditation and thinking of Him to whom you pray and of the matter for which you pray :

and use this as an ordinary act and at an ordinary hour, whereby the time itself shall put you in remembrance to do that which you are accustomed to do in that time. Apply your study to such hours as your discreet master doth assign you, earnestly ; and the time I know he will so limit as shall be both sufficient for your learning and safe for your health. And mark the sense and the matter of that you read, as well as the words. So shall you both enrich your tongue with words and your wit with matter, and judgment will grow as years groweth in you. Be humble and obedient to your master, for unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea, and feel in yourself what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you. Be courteous of gesture and affable to all men, with diversity of reverence according to the dignity of the person. There is nothing that winneth so much with so little cost. Give yourself to be merry, for you degenerate from your father if you find not yourself most able in wit and body, and to do anything when you be most merry ; but let your mirth be ever void of all scurrility and biting words to any man, for a wound given by a word is oftentimes harder to be cured than that which is given by the sword. Be you rather a hearer and bearer away of other men's talk than a beginner and procurer of speech. If you hear a wise sentence or an apt phrase, commit it to your memory with respect of the circumstance when you shall speak it. Let never oath be heard to come out of your mouth nor word of ribaldry ; detest it in others ; so shall custom make to yourself a law against it in yourself. Above all things tell no untruth ; no, not in trifles, the custom of it is naughty. Study and endeavour yourself to be virtuously occupied, so shall you make such a habit of well-doing in you that you shall not know how to do evil, though you would. Remember, my son, the noble blood you are descended of, by your mother's side, and think that only by virtuous life and good action you may be an ornament to that illustrious family, and otherwise through vice and sloth you shall be counted *labes generis*, one of the greatest curses that can happen to man. Your loving father, so long as you live in the fear of God."

The ladies of the Sidney family had, as we have seen, been as distinguished for their culture as the men, and Dorothy's parents spared no pains in the training and instruction of their large family of daughters. Both Lord and Lady Leicester themselves were persons of highly-cultivated tastes. Lord Leicester had the reputation of being one of the most accomplished scholars of the day. He was well read in the classics, and spoke elegant Latin, French, Italian and Spanish. The studious tastes which had distinguished him as a boy never left him. His wife more than once reproaches him during his absence from home, with neglecting her for his favourite books. "If either business or ceremony to such persons as may be useful to you, be the occasion of your seldom writing, I do dispense with the omission; but if your old inclination to reading be the cause, I do not forgive it." And like most great readers Lord Leicester was fond of committing his own reflections to paper. Algernon Sidney remarked at his trial that his father had filled as many as forty quires of paper with his observations on men and things, and "never one sheet of them was published, but he writ his own mind, to see what he could think of it another time, and blot it out again, maybe." Journals and newspaper extracts, comments on public events, treatises on the constitution and government of England, essays on religious and moral subjects in his own handwriting, were found among his papers at Penshurst. When sent on an embassy to Denmark he wrote his impressions of that Court and people, and their rude and uncivilized manners. In Paris he spent his leisure in collecting rare and curious books in different languages. Sir William Temple, who was educated at Penshurst and knew Lord Leicester from his childhood, described him many years afterwards as "a person of great learning and observation as well as truth." And Clarendon, who differed from him on many political questions and bore him no great love, owns that he was a person of great parts, very conversant with books and much addicted to mathematics, "though he had been a soldier"—but complains of the staggering and irresolution in his nature which unfitted him for public life. "He was in truth," continues the historian of

the Rebellion, "rather a speculative than a practical man, and expected a greater certitude in the consultation of business than the business of this world is capable of; which temper proved very ill-convenient to him through the course of his life." But whatever the faults and mistakes of his public career may have been, no one was ever more blameless and estimable in private life. His character was above reproach. A sincerely religious and conscientious man, his conduct invariably prompted the most high-minded motives, and was in strict accordance with the piety of his sentiments and the principles which he professed. His affection for his wife and children, his tender thoughtfulness for their welfare, breathes in every line of his letters. And he was never happier than in those years which he spent at Penshurst, enjoying the society of his family, and free to devote himself to the studies in which he took such unceasing delight.

Lady Leicester is described by her contemporaries as a person of good sense, fine breeding and excellent economy. Little as she resembled her sister in other respects, she had no mean share of her beauty and talents. Like her, she had inherited the abilities of the Percies. But while Lady Carlisle turned her attention to politics and played a leading part in the intrigues of Charles I. and Henrietta Maria's Court, Lady Leicester's whole life was devoted to her husband and children. "That Lady, in whose vigilance and discerning spirit your Lordship is so incomparably happy," wrote Sir John Temple, an old friend of the family, and the son of one of Sir Philip's favourite companions. Not content with directing her son's and daughter's education and conducting her lord's household on the most admirable system, she never loses an opportunity of furthering her husband's or children's interests. Her keen eye is ever on the alert, nothing escapes her notice, and she leaves no stone unturned to attain the objects which she has in view. She is a good type of the great lady of those days, a thoroughly clever and practical woman of the world, ambitious for her children's success but withal sincerely anxious for their happiness, not unmindful that there may be things even more worth having than wealth and position. Her letters are as natural as possible, and show us the warm-

hearted, affectionate woman that she was, apt to be quick-tempered at times with those about her, and easily dejected by the failure of her well-meant schemes, but genuinely good and true at heart. Her husband alludes more than once to her "melancholic temper," and regrets that his circumstances are such as to compel his wife to spend so much of her time away from Court. And Lady Leicester herself cannot always repress a sigh at her solitude and straitened means, and writes as if she were a good deal oppressed with the burden of her large family. But her affection never wavers. She thinks of her absent boys, sends messages to one, then to another, repeats anything that may have been said in their praise, and is busy on their behalf from morning till night.

And the one who naturally most occupied her thoughts at this period of her life was Dorothy, Doll as she is affectionately called in both her father and mother's letters. The eldest of their thirteen children, Dorothy was early distinguished by her grace and beauty, while her serious tastes and retiring habits endeared her in an especial way to her father. From the first there was about her something of what Fulke Greville calls his friend Philip's studiousness of mind, "that lovely and familiar gravity as carried grace and reverence above greater years." We find her timid and shy of disposition, shrinking from gay society, and preferring the company of her girl friends to that of the wits and gallants of the court. But beauty such as hers could not long remain hidden under a bushel, especially in a maiden of her rank, and with a mother as far-sighted and ambitious as Lady Leicester. And before long an admirer made his appearance in the person of Mr. Edmund Waller. There is a beautiful old moated house at Groombridge in the parish of Speldhurst, close to Penshurst, which was for many centuries the home of the Kentish Wallers. In the reign of Henry V. a valiant knight of that name, Sir Richard Waller, had fought gallantly at Agincourt, and made Charles, Duke of Orleans, prisoner. The manor-house at Groombridge had been for more than twenty years the residence of this captive prince, who consoled himself in his weary days of exile by writing sweet rondeaux on that pleasant land of France, where he wished himself

back again each time the spring leaves opened in the woods of Kent, and the swallows returned across the seas. Since then, Groombridge had passed into other hands, but the Wallers still lived at Hall Place, a manor in the neighbourhood, where Edmund Waller, a young Buckinghamshire squire, often came on visits to his Kentish cousins. His father, Mr. Robert Waller, of Amersham and Beaconsfield, had married the sister of another Buckinghamshire gentleman, who was soon to make his name famous throughout the land, John Hampden of Hampden, and dying young had left his son a large fortune. After being educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, where his talents attracted general attention, he entered Parliament before he was of age, and sat for several Buckinghamshire boroughs in succession. As early as 1623, when only eighteen years of age, he wrote a poem on the danger Prince Charles had escaped in a storm at sea on his return from Spain, which at once made his reputation at court. Four years later he carried off the greatest matrimonial prize of the day in the person of Miss Anne Banks, the only child and heiress of a wealthy alderman, a feat which, according to Clarendon, made him more famous than all his wit, fine arts and poetry. This action drew upon him the royal displeasure, as the heiress had been intended for a young Mr. Crofts, a member of the same family as the Herefordshire squire who had been jilted by Barbara Gamage forty years before. Accordingly Waller retired to his country house in Buckinghamshire, and wrote poetry and enjoyed the company of his young wife, until her death, after two short years of married life, left him a widower at twenty-four. For the next year or two he gave himself up to his grief and lived in his country retreat, consoling himself with the study of his favourite classics. It was his passion for Sacharissa which first brought him again into public notice. When the unfolding charms of young Lady Dorothy first caught his eye, his hand and heart were free, and he asked nothing better than an object on which to fix his somewhat fickle affections. In Dr. Johnson's words: "Being too young to resist beauty, and probably too vain to think himself resistible, he fixed his heart perhaps

half fondly, perhaps half ambitiously, upon the Lady Dorothy Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, whom he courted by the poetry in which Sacharissa is celebrated." The beauty and modesty of the fair young girl whom he saw growing up in the shelter of her ancestral home, like the half-opened rose to which he likened her, might well touch his heart and wake the strings of his slumbering lute. No one knew better how to turn his poetic gifts to the best advantage. He was fêted by all the Queen's ladies, and had already addressed Dorothy's aunt, Lady Carlisle, in strains of high-flown compliment as the Venus of Henrietta's Court.

"Down to the mountains from the partial skies
Came Juno, Pallas, and the Queen of Love,
To speak for that which was so justly given
To the bright Carlisle of the Court of Heaven."

In the same ode he alludes to Beauty invading the country solitudes, and to the healing springs of Tunbridge Wells, which had lately become a fashionable resort of the court, where the Queen and her ladies camped out in tents on the common, and drank the waters and played at rural life to their hearts' content. From the Wells it was but a step to Penshurst, and Waller could go and gaze on the gentle shepherdess of his song, and read the verses which he composed in her praise to a circle of admiring listeners on his return.

As a distinguished man of letters and the friend of the most eminent scholars of the day, Lord Leicester naturally took pleasure in Waller's company and welcomed his visits. Aubrey, who retailed most of the gossip of his time, is of opinion that he would gladly have given Mr. Waller one of his younger daughters, but not Dorothy, whether it was that he and Lady Leicester had other designs for their "deare Doll," or whether the young lady's own invincible opposition to the marriage was the reason. On the last point there seems to be no doubt. Dorothy rejected the poet's addresses from the first, and would never for a moment lend an ear to the sweet strains of love and poetry which he poured out at her feet. Her instincts told her at once that this was not

the man to satisfy her heart, and no one who remembers the part Waller played in after years will blame her for this. "They who read his character," says Dr. Johnson, "will not much condemn Sacharissa that she did not descend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence comprised in wit."

So the poet poured out the story of his hopeless love in strains of immortal melody. The classic shades of Penshurst, the woods and groves of Arcady, became once more musical with song. The famous oak which bore Sir Philip Sidney's name, the lofty beeches of the avenue in the park where Dorothy loved to walk, were invoked in turn, as witnesses of his love and despair.

"Go, boy, and carve this passion on the bark
Of yonder tree, which stands the sacred mark
Of noble Sidney's birth
Ye lofty beeches, tell this matchless Dame,
That if together ye fed all one flame,
It could not equalise the hundredth part
Of what her eyes have kindled in my heart."

Nature itself, the poet sings, is moved to pity for his woes. The listening deer in the park pause to hear his complaint, the tallest beeches bow their heads in compassion with his moans, only the cruel fair passes him by with scorn. Then he calls her kindred to his help. One day he implores her absent father to return home and use his influence with the haughty beauty, another he bids her follow the pattern of her lady mother, who "exceeds the spring in joy and bounty." And then, as a last hope, he invokes the shade of Sir Philip Sidney, the sweet singer of love and lovers, to melt her stony heart. Or else he addresses his verses to Sacharissa's maiden friends, and seeks the help of Phyllis or Amoret, as he styles them. Even her maid, Mrs. Braughton, is honoured with a copy of verse, inscribed to the Servant of a Fair Lady, and finds herself addressed as the priest of the stern goddess, "who best knows the soft season when her mind may be to pity or to love inclined." For she it is whose skilful fingers twine those curls where a thousand Cupids sit, and who is the handmaiden of this divine goddess.

“The Graces put not more exactly on
Th’ attire of Venus, when the ball she won,
Than that young beauty by thy care is drest,
When all our youth prefers her to the rest.”

Again, Sacharissa’s simplest acts are made the subject of his verse. One poem describes her passing through a crowd, another contradicts a false report of her being painted. One set of verses is addressed to her as a Lady who can sleep when she pleases, another offers the Apology of Sleep for not approaching the Lady who can do anything but sleep when she pleases. And in all, the burden of the lover’s song is still the same—

“But for Sacharissa I
Do not only grieve, but die.”

How far this passion was real it is hard to tell. It is impossible to feel much sympathy for a love which found expression in such cunning conceits, or much pity for the failure of a courtship that was conducted in so public a manner. The whole thing is too artificial, too deliberate. We can hear the applause of the listening courtiers as Mr. Waller recited one copy of verse after another, in the presence of an admiring circle. The cruelty of his mistress can hardly have caused him any very lasting pangs. All through, he is too conscious of a pleasurable sense in the knowledge of the fame that his verses will win, for us to feel any serious compassion for the sorrows which inspired them. He goes so far as to declare that what he has sung in his immortal strain—

“Though unsuccessful was not sung in vain.
All but the Nymph, that should redress his wrong,
Attend his passion and approve his song.
Like Phœbus thus, acquiring unsought praise,
He caught at Love and filled his arm with bays.”

Verses like these leave us cold, and give us no very profound idea of the poet’s passion for his mistress. And yet among these frigid conceits, amid all this vanity and artificiality, we find a few lyrics which owe their birth to a genuine inspiration. Such, for instance, are the verses on his absence from his mistress, *The Banished Self*.

" It is not that I love you less
 Than when before your feet I lay ;
 But to prevent the sad increase
 Of hopeless love, I keep away.
 In vain, alas ! for everything
 Which I have known belong to you
 Your form does to my fancy bring,
 And makes my old wounds bleed anew.
 But vow'd I have, and never must
 Your banisht servant trouble you ;
 For if I break, you may mistrust
 The vow I made to love you too."

These lines, so simple in form and natural in feeling, move us far more than all the forced and laboured similes in which he compares the cruel nymph to the cloven rock, and her beauty to the scorching rays of Phœbus, or to the fiery liquor which maddens the brain. Again, for perfection of form and metre, it would be hard to find a lyric that surpasses the *Lines on a Girdle*.

" That which her slender waist confin'd
 Shall now my joyful temples bind ;
 No monarch but would give his crown
 His arms might do what this has done.
 It was my heaven's extremest sphere,
 The pale which held that lovely deer.
 My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
 Did all within this circle move.
 A narrow compass ! and yet there
 Dwelt all that's good and all that's fair.
 Give me but what this riband bound,
 Take all the rest the sun goes round."

But of all the Sacharissa poems none is so beautiful or so famous as the *Song to the Rose*. If Waller had written nothing else he would deserve a high rank among English poets for the sake of this one lyric. Often as the verses have been quoted, we give them here once more ; no life of Sacharissa would be complete without them.

" Go, lovely Rose !
 Tell her that wastes her time and me
 That now she knows
 When I resemble her to thee
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
 And shuns to have her graces spy'd,
 That had'st thou sprung
 In deserts, where no men abide,
 Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
 Of beauty from the light retir'd ;
 Bid her come forth,
 Suffer herself to be desir'd,
 And not blush so to be admired.

Then die ! that she
 The common fate of all things rare
 May read in thee,
 How small a part of time they share
 That are so wondrous sweet and fair."

The perfection of these lines needs no comment. No one can read them without delight, or return to them without a fresh sense of pleasure. Here what concerns us chiefly is the beautiful picture which they give of young Lady Dorothy herself. They recall a charming miniature at Penshurst, where she is painted in a blue gown, wearing a white rose in her hair. So she appeared in the eyes of her lover, some bright June morning, when the beeches were decked in brilliant verdure, and the nightingales sang from every bough. Then the poet, stirred at the sight of her loveliness, plucked a rosebud from the garden and gave it her with these verses.

All the delicious freshness of love's young dream is there. All the rare and delicate charm of the shy young beauty, in the first blush of her sweet maidenhood, deepened by the poet's mournful sense of the fleeting nature of youth and joy, and all the best life has to give. And for us who read them by the light of the future, who know the tragic fate which was so soon to put an end to Dorothy's brief spell of wedded happiness, the song has a still deeper and more pathetic meaning.

CHAPTER IV

1634—1636

The Sacharissa Poems—Vandyke's Portraits—Lord Leicester's Embassy to Paris.

THE exact date of the Sacharissa poems is difficult to fix. But we know with tolerable certainty that they ranged from about the year 1634 to 1638, from the time, that is to say, when Dorothy Sidney was sixteen or seventeen, until the year before her marriage. One of the earliest was on her picture as painted by Vandyke. Here Waller addresses her as Lady Dorothy Sidney, and not yet as Sacharissa, that strange name of the poet's invention which, according to Dr. Johnson's solemn definition, "is derived from Sugar, and implies a spiritless mildness and dull good nature." It was in the year 1632 that the Flemish master first came to England, and became almost immediately the most popular portrait painter at Charles I.'s Court. He had rooms at Eltham Palace, and painted all the Sidneys, either in that studio which Waller calls the Shop of Beauty, or else at Penshurst. Lord Leicester was probably one of the first who sat for his likeness to the new painter, since the fine portrait at Penshurst bears the date of 1632. We see him there in the prime of life, a strikingly handsome and courtly personage, the very type of a fine gentleman of Charles I.'s court. Lady Leicester's portrait, and that of her sister, Lady Carlisle, were painted by Vandyke about the same time, while the picture of Dorothy on which Waller wrote his verses probably belongs to a rather later date. Here she is represented as she figured at some masque or pastoral

play, in the fancy dress of a shepherdess. Her regular features and fine grey eyes are shaded by a broad-brimmed felt hat, turned up with blue. In one hand she holds a crook, in the other a bunch of roses, and a single rose is at her breast. A replica of this much-admired picture exists at Althorp, where there is also another very charming one by the same painter, with her hair in ringlets, and a pearl necklace round her throat. But by far the finest of all the portraits which Vandyke painted of her, is the half-length in the Beauties' room at Petworth, her uncle Lord Northumberland's home. Here she is seen, standing by a rose-bush, wearing a red gown and black lace scarf, and turning round as if about to speak. The two pictures evidently belong to the same period, and were probably painted before her marriage, in the days when she was one of the reigning beauties of the Court. That at Petworth was engraved in Lombart's *Book of Countesses*, and in Lodge's *Portraits*, and gives us perhaps the best idea of her appearance. The face is full of character and good sense, and the likeness both to her mother and aunt is marked. But although her features are more those of a Percy than a Sidney, she has the fair hair and beautiful complexion of Lady Pembroke, her great-aunt. We see the skin of roses and lilies of which Waller sings, the radiant eyes that woke again the old pain when he saw them on the painter's canvas, and the sweet expression which was after all perhaps the chief charm of Dorothy's face.

"Strange that thy hand should not inspire
 The beauty only, but the fire ;
 Not the form alone and grace,
 But act and power of a face."

Another picture at Penshurst, representing Lord Leicester's sons, belongs to this period, and is ascribed, as are most pictures of the period, to Vandyke. But in any case it possesses historical value on account of the portrait of Algernon Sidney which it contains. We see him here as a child in black court suit and stockings, with bright red hair, standing by the side of his two brothers, Philip, a tall fair boy, with a sullen look, and rather heavy cast of features, and little Robin.

In the autumn of 1632, the two eldest boys accompanied their father when he was sent to Denmark, to bear the King's condolences on the death of his grandmother, Sophia, Queen Dowager of Denmark. A fair wind quickly landed the travellers in the mouth of the Elbe, whence they journeyed to Denmark, and in October we find Lord Leicester at Rensburg, in Holstein. During his stay here he wrote a long letter to his brother-in-law, Algernon, Lord Percy, afterwards the famous Lord High Admiral, whose noble portrait by Vandyke is still at Penshurst. There had been, it appears, some estrangement between the two noblemen, who were, both before and afterwards, such firm friends, and Lord Leicester in this letter begs his brother-in-law to forget these small differences and go and visit his sister in her solitude.

“I present a request unto your Lordship that you will make a visit to your sister, my dear wife, if she be at Penshurst, for if she be with you it needes not, and if at London, I am sure you will. That poor place hath not offended, that it should be forbidden the honour to receive you. She hath not offended, that she should be deprived of the consolation and delight which your Lordship's company ever brings her ; let me that am the criminal be punished with the trouble of mind for not enjoying the pleasure of your conversation, nor the glory of seeing you again under my roof. Neither in this have I mine own interest in any commendation at all. That which I desire is only in consideration of your sister, whose disposition I know apt enough to be melancholick, especially in that solitary place where, though it be the best I have, I must confess it was her ill fortune that placed her there, in recompense whereof my greatest study is to procure comforts for her, which she shall never want, if my life can serve her with any.”

Lord Leicester's absence from home however proved shorter than he expected, and so quickly did he dispatch the business with which he had been entrusted, that by the end of November he landed again at Margate. The credit which he gained on this mission led to his employment in a more important post, and four years later he was appointed

Ambassador Extraordinary to the King of France. On the 17th of May, 1636, the new minister, accompanied by his two eldest sons, embarked at Rye in the teeth of a strong gale and landed at Dieppe, whence he journeyed "by very ill roads, in extreme hot weather," to the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs in Paris. His letters home give minute particulars of his journey and reception at the French Court. He records the King and Queen's inquisitive questionings as to their royal kindred across the Channel, and takes care to mention Louis XIII.'s regard for "ma bonne sœur d'Angleterre," and his curiosity as to whether the little Prince of Wales can speak French. And he gives an amusing account of his introduction to Monsieur's little daughter, la Grande Mademoiselle, then only eight years old, but "a very fine child," who received him with a stately curtsy. From the first the new Ambassador's courtesy and tact made him agreeable at the French court, and if he found it impossible to effect one object of his mission, the restoration of Charles I.'s nephew, the young Elector Palatine, to his father's dominions, he was successful in removing previous grounds of complaint, and in keeping up a good understanding between the two monarchs. But in his very first letter from Paris we find a request for supplies of money, "seeing that he is almost at the end of his own stock; and knows not where to obtain credit in this foreign country." All through his diplomatic career Lord Leicester found himself hampered by this difficulty. "The truth is," wrote Archbishop Laud from Whitehall, "Monies are verye short here"; and the King's servants had to wait not only months but years for the payment of arrears due to them. And Paris, Lord Leicester soon discovered to his cost, was "the most chargeable place in Christendom." So that with the best intentions in the world, he could not live without dishonour to the King and to himself, unless he had some hope of a reasonable subsistence.

"I beseech you, sir," he writes to Mr. Secretary Coke in October of the same year, "be not displeased if I ask bread when I want it, or discover my necessities to those who have power to relieve me. I have borrowed a great deal of money, both in England and here, for my expenses in this employ-

ment, and now lately I have been compelled to take up five hundred pounds sterling more, for my necessary use, wherein, I assure you, I found much difficulty ; and one great merchant banker directly refused me, partly because in these troublesome and doubtful times they are loth to part with their money, and partly because one of our Ambassadors here has made him sue for his money in England, before he could recover it. If, therefore, my service, which I contribute with as much industry and fidelity as duty unto his Majesty's affairs, be acceptable unto him, or if his pity be at all inclined towards me, I doubt not but by your mediation and his Majesty's remembrance of his own gracious promise, I shall be freed from want and dishonour for the present, and for the time to come secured from the ruin and destruction of myself and family, *infelici fœcunditati fortunæ toties obnoxia*, as it was said of Agrippina."

But, for all these earnest representations, the Ambassador's allowance was paid in a very niggardly fashion, and at his death, forty years afterwards, arrears of pay were still due to him for his services as Ambassador in the reign of Charles I.

Meanwhile, at home, Lady Leicester was leaving no stone unturned to forward her husband's interests. She writes letters to all her friends at Court, implores the help of her own brothers, of her sister's favourite, Lord Holland, whose influence with the Queen was well known, and finally she applies to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and excuses herself for not waiting upon him herself, owing to her state of health and to the wintry season. Laud replied in civil terms, promising her all the assistance in his power, but telling her frankly that the King and his ministers were short of funds, and that it was difficult if not impossible to send his lordship the much-needed supplies.

She, poor lady, had just given birth to her twelfth child and ninth daughter, and it is not to be wondered at if she writes to her absent husband in a rather querulous tone.

"MY DEAREST HART,—My Lord of Holland sent me this letter of my Lord Treasurer's to him, and I wonder much

that I have heard nothing since, having desired Mr. Hawkins in a letter since he was here to solicit the business very diligently, and to send one of purpose to let me know when anything was concluded, which I fear he has not yet had occasion to do. Sir John Temple, who is inquisitive in all affairs and much your servant, told me that in the Court it was rumoured that either you had commandment to make new demands or some restrictions, which you had not before. He also hears that the King is well inclined to the French business. My Lord of Holland is very zealous in it, and not one besides, which makes me fear that there will be great opposition in what you desire to effect. But howsoever, I hope your labours and good intentions shall be well accepted by God and your King. It is a month since I expected my sister's [Lady Carlisle] company, but my Lord Deputy [Strafford] is still thereabouts, and till he be gone I must not look for her. My brother [Algernon, Lord Northumberland] I have not yet seen, being full of the King's business, as he pretends; neither have I perceived any inclination in him to draw me from the solitariness I suffer in this place; for though I expressed a willingness to go to him, were I accommodated for a journey, yet have I received no manner of invitation, which I take a little unkindly; but it shall not much afflict me. For I thank God, and you, my dearest Hart, that the obligations which I have received from my friends have been very small, and I hope my necessities of their favours will not be increased. But of this coldness in my brother I will take no notice, or very little, and content myself the best I can with this lonely life, without envying their greatness, their plenty, or their jollity. The principal trouble I suffer, next to the want of your company, is the apprehension I have of your being crossed in what you desire to accomplish. But my best and most earnest prayers shall be often presented for you and with your own, which I believe are better than mine. I hope these blessings shall be obtained which will make us happy; and at this time, my only dear, no more shall be said to you by your most loving wife,

“D. LEYCESTER.

“PENSURST, 10 *November*, 1636.

“Yesterday we had here a very solemn fast, which is appointed to continue every Wednesday, till it shall please God to remove this plague from us. All our girls are well and so was Robin a week ago. To Algernon I do send a blessing, whom I hear much commended by all that comes of you; and Nicolas, who spake well of very few, said he had a huge deal of wit and much sweetness of nature.”

The letter is eminently characteristic of the writer. The great lady, born and bred in Court circles and closely connected with the leading personages of the day, cannot refrain from a sigh, when she thinks of the gaieties and the splendour from which she is banished, and is painfully conscious of the straitness of circumstances which keep her in the country. But her natural tenderness breaks out before the end, and we feel that, after all, her love for her husband and pride in her children are the strongest elements of her nature. As regards the coldness of which she complains in her brother, she did Lord Northumberland wrong. For, a few days afterwards, she received a letter in which he explained how distressed he was not to see her, but that the discovery of certain abuses in the navy had occupied him so fully, that it had been impossible for him to come to Penshurst. “Believe me,” he wrote, “I long for nothing more than to see you.” This affection for his sister seems to have been genuine, and after events proved that she and her husband had no more faithful friend. A few weeks later he wrote again to give her the welcome news that an order to pay Lord Leicester’s bills had been issued to my Lord Treasurer, and to promise her further particulars the following week, when he hopes to be at Penshurst. He kept his word, and in Lady Leicester’s next letter to her lord, she tells him that her brother’s presence the week before had forced her to omit writing. “He came on Monday and left us again on Thursday, in which time we were so continually together I could not make my despatch. I perceive no alteration in him, neither do I find him much engaged in friendship with any of the great ones. I enquired what he had heard concerning you. He told me nothing to your prejudice, but that it was said Seigneur Condé had

persuaded you to be more inclinable to France than is well thought on here, and that you were more earnest to engage the King in a war than the wise here doth think fit. But I hope your proceedings are unblamable, and that your master, who understands them best, will find them such as shall give him perfect satisfaction."

A week afterwards, Lord Northumberland promised his help in securing the immediate payment of a legacy which Lord Carlisle, apparently, had bequeathed to Lady Dorothy. The sudden death of that nobleman had left Lady Carlisle a widow, and the immediate effect of this unexpected event was to give Lady Leicester a pleasure she did not altogether covet, in the shape of a visit from her sister.

"My sister is yet here," writes Lady Leicester in December 1636, "and so she intends to be till the later end of Christmas; but I cannot brag much of her kindness to me, for it is very little, and she certainly stays here for other considerations than my company."

There she came, and there she remained for several weeks, still engaged in carrying on intrigues with statesmen of different parties, corresponding with Holland on the one hand, and with Strafford on the other, and amusing herself in the interval with receiving the homage of Waller, who improved the occasion by writing an ode to *Lady Carlisle in Mourning*.

The poet was still assiduous in his attentions to Lady Dorothy, and there is a letter of his, written it may be about this time, which shows that he enjoyed a certain degree of intimacy with the family at Penshurst. Another Kentish young lady, a member of the Vane family, had, it appears, sent the poet a handkerchief so curiously embroidered, that he could not for the life of him discover the meaning of the strange characters and fantastic devices with which it was adorned. So he calls Lady Dorothy to his help, and in the following witty effusion begs her to use her influence with her friend to solve the riddle.

"MADAM,—The handkercher I received from Mistress Vane having so near resemblance to a dream, which presents us with a mixture of things that have no affinity one

with another, I have, as the Assyrian kings did with their dreams, consulted with all the magicians and cunning women in our countree, and though it be easie to see through it, I find none that can interpret it. I am sending it to Oxford to the astrologer, to know if there be any constellations or figures in the upper globe, to which those in the four corners may allude, for on earth the Herball tells us of nothing like them. I did first apprehend it was as a potent charm, having power like the wand of Circe to transform me into some strange shape, but the crosses in the middle perswading me that it was a good Christian handkercher, I ventured to wipe my face with it, when the golden fringe, with a rough salute, told me it was for some nobler use. Madam, I beseech your ladyship, use your interest with her to unriddle this handkercher which so perplexes me. I am sorry that a lady of so various a phansye hath not the power of framing living things too, that we might behold some new compositions and kindes of things which dull Nature never thought of. Seriously, Madam, I humbly kiss her hands for this favour, which not being to be wasted by use, I shall eternally keep for her sake, and do presume she will pardon this rambling acknowledgment made in imitation of the style of her handkercher, by, Madam,

“Your ladyship’s most humble servant,

“EDMUND WALLER.

“*For my Ladye Dorothye Sidney.*”¹

It was at this time also that the poet wrote the verses to my Lord Leicester, in which he implores him to return home and end the contention of rival suitors for the bright-eyed nymph who scorned them all.

“Not that thy trees at Penshurst groan
Oppressed with their timely load,
And seem to make their silent moan
That their great Lord is now abroad.
They to delight his taste or eye
Would spend themselves in fruit and die.

¹ State Papers, Dom. Ch. I. ccccxxii. 122.

Not that thy harmless deer repine
And think themselves unjustly slain
By any other hand than thine,
Whose arrows they would gladly stain ;
 No, nor thy friends which hold too dear
 That peace with France which keeps thee there.

All these are less than that great cause
Which now exacts your presence here,
Wherein there meets the divers laws
Of public and domestic care.
 For one bright Nymph our youth contends
 And on your prudent choice depends.

Not the bright shield of Thetis' son,
For which such stern debate did rise,
That the great Ajax Telamon
Refused to live without the prize.
 Those active peers did more engage
 Than she the gallants of our age.

That beam of beauty which begun
To warm us so when thou wert here,
Now scorches like the raging sun
When Sirius does first appear.
 Oh, fix this flame and let despair
 Redeem the rest from endless care."

CHAPTER V

1636—1637

Dorothy's Suitors—Lord Devonshire—Lady Leicester's Letters—
Leicester House.

WHETHER, as Waller sings, the hand of Lady Dorothy was a prize for which the gallants of the age were contending as eagerly as the Greek heroes fought of old for the shield of Achilles, it is certain that the question of this young lady's marriage was seriously occupying the minds of her near relations. By this time she had already completed her nineteenth year, and as the eldest of so many daughters, her mother was naturally anxious to see her well married. It is, however, significant that among all the suitors mentioned as possible husbands for Dorothy in Lady Leicester's letters, Waller's name never once appears. Whatever her lord may have thought of the poet's suit, it is plain that in her eyes he was not of high enough rank to be a fit match for the daughter of Sidneys and Percies. As long as this point was clear, Lady Leicester was well content that Mr. Waller should devote his muse to the praise of Lady Dorothy's beauty, and write graceful letters, or read dainty love-songs to Sacharissa in the hearing of the ladies and wits of Queen Henrietta's court.

Waller's poetic passion for her daughter served at least to blazon the fame of her fair face abroad, and we find frequent allusions to Lady Dorothy's beauty in contemporary letters. These reports reached the ears of her uncle, Henry Percy, a gay gentleman of the Court, who was fortunate enough to enjoy a high degree of the Queen's favour. Till now he had taken

little notice of his sister and her family, but in February 1637 he writes in cordial terms to Lady Leicester, from St. James', giving her the latest news of her husband, and adding a message to his niece in his postscript. "Give me leave to present my humble service to my Lady Dorothy, and tell her she must go into France, so what her beauty and her father's wisdom will do, the Lord knows!"

Already the Court gossips were busy finding a husband for the young beauty, and towards the close of 1636, Lord Russell, the heir of the house of Bedford, was suggested as a suitable match for her. But the young lord had fixed his affections elsewhere, and in the course of the following year he married another beautiful and charming damsel, Lady Ann Carr, daughter of the notorious Countess of Somerset. This rumour had apparently reached Penshurst, for Lady Leicester, in writing to her husband at Christmas, observes—

"It would joy me much to receive some hopes of that lord's addresses to Doll, which you writ of to me, for, next to what concerns you, I confess she is considered by me above anything of this world."

But in another quarter just then, proposals were made with regard to Lady Dorothy which pleased her mother still better. The gentleman in question was young Lord Devonshire, who had lately returned from his travels, and whose rank and fortune made him a suitable match for Lord Leicester's daughter. His conduct was irreproachable, his character and tastes were well suited to hers, and both he and his brother, the gallant cavalier Sir Charles Cavendish, were among the handsomest and most accomplished young men at Court. And their only sister, Lady Anne Cavendish, was the most intimate friend of Dorothy's girlhood. She had married Lord Rich, Lord Warwick's eldest son, and her early death was the subject of one of Waller's finest poems. Already in her lifetime he had addressed the two friends in one set of verses—

"Tell me, lovely loving pair,
Why so kind and so severe,
Why so careless of our care,
Only to yourselves so dear?"

And when she died after a short and sudden illness, he sought to console his fair Sacharissa for her beloved friend's loss, and bade her dry her tears with the assurance that love such as hers could never die.

“For as your tears and sorrow-wounded soul
Prove well that on your part the bond is whole,
So all we know of what they do above,
Is, that they happy are, and that they love.”

It was from Lord Holland, the uncle of the lamented lady's husband, that the first overtures came on the part of Lord Devonshire's family, and for a time at least Lady Leicester had good reason to expect that his proposals would lead to a speedy and prosperous result. Nothing in the whole world, as she wrote to her husband, would give her greater joy than to see her dear Doll so happily matched.

Both of her brothers now urged her to come to town. But there were difficulties in the way. Money was scarce as usual, and servants were hard to find.

“My brother” [Lord Northumberland], she writes from Penshurst at Christmas, “is very earnest in persuading me to come to London, which I have promised to do in the latter end of February, though I know not how to accommodate myself handsomely for that place; but my especial want is a gentleman-usher, which I am unwilling to take. If Daniel behave himself well with you, which I beseech you to let me know, for if he be not worth keeping, I would enquire after another and so free myself from him; but if he be good, I will suffer much rather than take a new one, and I will do anything rather than wish him from you, if he does you service.”

It had long been Lady Leicester's wish to have a town house suitable to her husband's rank and position. And this the Sidneys had never yet possessed. The old Lord Leicester had, as we have seen, made use of his sister and nephew's house, Baynard's Castle, whenever he was in town, and it was there that the present Earl himself had been born. But now Lord Leicester received from the King, perhaps instead of other payments due to him, a grant of a field then known as

Swan Close, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, and at once proceeded to build a house on this site. Here then, on the ground now occupied by Leicester Place, the stately mansion known as Leicester House arose. The house itself was pulled down in 1790, but old prints have made us familiar with its majestic façade and spacious court-yard. It stood facing Leicester Square, and its gardens, decorated with shrubs and statues, extended over Lisle Street, and ran as far back as Gerard Street. This was, in all respects, a family mansion such as Lady Leicester would have desired. But as yet its walls were in an unfinished state, and some months later we hear of workmen being still engaged on the rooms of the upper story. So she remained at Penshurst till March, and wrote the following letters, which are interesting examples of the vigilance with which she watched the course of public events, both at home and abroad, and allowed nothing to escape her which might be to her lord's advantage.

“MY DEAREST HART,—My brother Northumberland writ me word that your letters gave little hope that our propositions would be received in France, and all that I hear doth extremely discourage me from expecting a good conclusion in those affairs, but if you part, please your Master. I hope we shall not suffer, for howsoever the business doth prosper between the Kings, I believe this employment may prove advantageous to you in a great proportion, which I confess is the principal thing I consider ; and I do not believe that you have such enemies in the Court as you conceive, for I have made curious inquisitions, and cannot hear that anything hath been said to your prejudice, but what proceeded from the old Secretary [Coke]. If the great man be less kind to you than he was, assuredly it is because you have entertained so great an intelligence with Holland, which now is not to be diminished ; for then it will be thought that your addresses to him were only in consideration of the money business, which you desired he should solicit. I forgot to tell you the last week that my Lord Essex's son was dead, and now I think that it will be no news. My Lord Spenser also hath done the King the courtesy to leave him a good ward [Henry,



DOROTHY, COUNTESS OF 'LEICESTER.

From the picture by Jan Dyck.

Lord Spencer, who three years afterwards became the writer's son-in-law]. And if you desire news for your little Watt [young Montagu], you may tell him that his father is drunk every meal, and that his brother Mandeville is enriched by Sir Nathaniel Rich, who is dead, and hath given all his fortune to him. You tell me I do not care for news, but I desire much more than you do afford me ; for it is very long since you told me anything of your opinion concerning the success of your business, which I long extremely to hear, and anything else that belongs to you I covet with an excessive greediness. Wherefore, my dearest, be a little more liberal in these informations, and be assured that your pains are bestowed for her satisfaction who would not refuse to give her life for your service, so infinitely are you beloved by your

“ D. LEYCESTER.

“ PENSURST, 28 *December*, 1636.

“ My sister is yet here, and all the children are well.”

On the 10th of January she writes again with fresh particulars as to the latest intrigues at Court, but is cautious this time to use cyphers for the names of the personages she mentions. Once more she repeats her complaint at the delay of Lord Leicester's letters, none of which had reached her during the last fortnight.

“ Your letters come so rarely to me, as I begin to think myself faulty in writing so often ; and yet, till I find some other reasons to discourage me in this diligence, I continue my accustomed commerce, though I have extreme little to say, as will appear by what you are likely to receive from me at this present. I hear that the Mareschal [Earl of Arundel] has been very kindly used by the King since his coming home, which in my opinion he deserves ; though he hath done nothing that was desired, he has had an ill journey, scurvy usage and a base present. Since my last to you, I was assured that it was Secretary Coke which said that, though you changed not your instructions, yet had you not gone altogether according to the King's mind ; and with this professed to esteem you. If I can gain the friendship of 139 [Archbishop Laud] I shall be in much hope that you will

succeed 200 [Lord Strafford, then Deputy of Ireland], whom they say will only stay the accomplishment of what he has undertaken; but I fear that 154 [Lady Carlisle], who has more power with him than any creature, will do nothing for our good. And when you write to 142 [Lord Holland], assure yourself 154 [Lady Carlisle] shall never fail to see it, and from thence it spreads all over England. My sister left us this day and is gone to Nonsuch. I hope you hear often from my brother Northumberland, for when he was with me he inquired how he might send his letters to you. My Lord of St. Alban's and the Comptroller have had much jollity this Christmas at their houses. The weather is so extreme cold, as I write not without pain, though I am in the Chamber which you know has many good properties; and yet can it not please me much till you be in it; neither shall any other place give me a perfect contentment in your absence, so dearly is your company beloved by your

"D. LEYCESTER."

A month later she writes again, this time in a much happier strain. A messenger from Paris, Monsieur Augiers, had just arrived in town, bringing news of the success of Lord Leicester's negotiations, and of the treaty about to be signed between the two kings. And besides the letters which he brought, several others from her lord had reached Penshurst. Fortune at length seems to smile upon her, friends speak kind words, and the world looks brighter. So she writes in the fulness of her heart, and asks her husband's forgiveness for her reproaches.

"MY DEAREST HART,—For my exceptions to your silence I humbly ask your pardon, for since I have received three letters from you, the one by Monsieur Augiers, who I have not yet seen, but he writ to me with much civilitie; and I hear that he speaks of you with all the honour, estimation, and affection that can be; which shall make him as welcome to me as either of my brothers. Two letters more I have had since his arrival, but that which was first written came last to my hands, for my Lord of Holland sent it to me yesterday, and the other which was dated the 27th January was received

by me the 4th February. They all brought such contentment to me as nothing but your own person can give me a joy beyond it ; and though you reproach me for chiding, yet I hope the consideration of the cause shall free me from any further punishment than that gentle rebuke which you have already given me. By the two letters here enclosed, you will find a change from what I have heretofore declared to you, and besides the good success which is now expected of your negotiation, I find there is a general applause of your proceedings, which is no small delight to me, and, I hope, will be a great encouragement to you. For though I conceive your labours to be very great, yet I trust the conclusion will be very good, and then all the pains will be remembered with pleasure and advantage to you. I hope you apprehend more an alteration in 139 [Archbishop Laud] than there is cause, for I could never hear of anything he said to your prejudice, though I have been inquisitive enough ; but that he favours 156 [Lord Scudamore, the English Ambassador in ordinary, who looked on Lord Leicester as a rival] there is no question, and if it be nothing but what has happened between you, I believe it will easily pass away. I am glad you find 200 [Lord Strafford] kind to you, for certainly he may do great courtesies, and so has he behaved himself lately, for he is extreme great with 139 [Archbishop Laud], 153 [Cottington], 151 [Coke], and 152 [Windebank]. I have no more cause to fear ill offices from 154 [Lady Carlisle] than formerlye ; for it is no new conceit that she is not affectionate to me or mine, but if the party deceive me I shall be glad, and for any thing I know, we are on the same terms you left us. The present for the Queen of France I will be very careful to provide, but it cannot be handsome for that proportion of money which you do mention, for those Bone-Laces, if they be good, are dear, and I will send of the best, for the honour of the nation and my own credit. You persuade my going to London, and there I shall play the ill housewife, which I perceive you are content to suffer, rather than I should remain in this solitariness, and yet my intention is not to remove till the beginning of the next month, except M. Augiers' going may carry me up sooner. All the children I will leave here, according to

your advice, and if you can spare Daniel, I desire that you will send him to me, for the time of my being at London. Mr. Seladine comes in with your letter, whom I am engaged to entertain a little ; besides, it is supper time, or else I should bestow one side of this paper in making love to you, and since I may with modesty express it, I will say that if it be love to think on you sleeping and waking, to discourse of nothing with pleasure but what concerns you, to wish myself every hour with you, and to pray for you with as much devotion as for mine own soul ; then certainly it may be said that I am in love ; and this is all that you shall at this time hear from your

“ D. LEYCESTER.

“ PENSURST, 7 *February*, 1637.

“ Kiss my boy [Algernon] from me, who sent me a very prettie French letter.”

Early in March Lady Leicester and Lady Dorothy accordingly moved to town and took up their abode in Leicester House before the decoration of the interior was fully completed. In a long letter to her husband, written on the 14th of March, Lady Leicester describes her doings since her arrival. She has been twice to Court and has been kindly received by the Queen, who was graciously pleased to express her favour towards Lord Leicester. The King too seemed anxious to show her some kindness, but “ could not find the way,” and finally told her he thought her much fatter than she used to be, a short speech which made her blush, and set all the company a-laughing. But still Doll’s marriage, the affair which her mother has just now most at heart, does not prosper. What is worse, she is confident now that her sister, and her sister’s creature, Lord Holland, have been secretly thwarting her wishes all the time. And what excites her indignation beyond everything, is that Lady Carlisle, who supped with her at Leicester House the night before, has informed her that they are actually making use of Monsieur Augiers, Lord Leicester’s emissary, to negotiate a marriage between Lord Devonshire and the great French heiress, Mademoiselle de Rohan ! This is altogether too much for

Lady Leicester's patience, and she implores her lord to put a stop to this plan: "For if an answer will be given which will put them out of all hope, it may be we shall be thought on." The young lord himself, she is convinced, would never think of such a thing, but she hears that his mother and sister—they who professed such affection for Doll—have set their hearts much on the business!

And then the happy thought crosses her mind that perhaps this French heiress may be secured for her own son, Philip, Lord Lisle, at this time a boy of sixteen, who was with his father in Paris. "If they have any inclination to place her in England, I pray thee let Philip take courage and try his fortune, for I hear she looked much at him, as if she liked him well, and I do not think that four or five thousand pounds a year difference in the estate will prove so considerable as they expect. Perhaps, if you could handsomely make it known that my Lord of Devonshire's estate will be but £3000 a year during his mother's life, who is but a young woman, they would not be very forward to entertain it. Holland professes to my sister that he desires the parties here might receive an absolute refusal; but I am confident that if he had showed himself real to my Lord of Devonshire marrying Doll, which he professed, they never would have employed him in making a marriage for another, which makes me conclude that either his lady [Lady Carlisle] commands him to hinder Doll, or else he is so weak and so unfaithful as his friendship is not worthy the least rush."

Lady Leicester had good reason to mistrust her sister and Lord Holland's sincerity, but her fears as to the French marriage were groundless. The Duchesse de Rohan had far more ambitious views for her daughter, the greatest heiress in France, and during many months Lord Leicester was employed by Charles I. in negotiating a marriage between Mademoiselle de Rohan and his nephew, Prince Rupert. In the end that plan was abandoned, owing to the jealousy of the French Court, and eventually the heiress took the law into her own hands, and surprised the world by marrying a simple gentleman, M. de Chabot. It was long, however, before Lady Leicester gave up her cherished scheme of a marriage between

Lord Devonshire and her dear Doll. The kindness of his mother and sister made the young man's own hesitation the more vexatious in her eyes. But he knew his own mind best, and was in no hurry to take a wife. In the end he married Lady Elizabeth Cecil, daughter of William, second Earl of Salisbury, whose portrait, painted by Vandyke, hangs in the Beauties' Room at Petworth, side by side with the pictures of Lady Rich, Lady Anne Carr, and Dorothy herself. These four ladies, all of them in the bloom of youthful loveliness, and yet with the gentle seriousness of the young matron on their brows, are among the most attractive types of fair and gracious womanhood which the great master's art has made immortal.

CHAPTER VI

1637—1638

Lord Lovelace's Wooing—Dr. Hammond at Penshurst—Sir William Temple.

A NEW suitor for Lady Dorothy now came forward in the person of Lord Lovelace, a young man of rank and fortune, who had just come of age. From a worldly point of view there was much to recommend him. He had broad acres and a pretty person, and professed the deepest admiration for Lord Leicester's fair daughter. The match met with the warm approval of Lady Leicester's own family, and was especially encouraged by Henry Percy. Unfortunately there were drawbacks in the young man's character which made Lady Leicester hesitate. He was known to have kept bad company, and said to be inclined to drink. Lord Danby, who, as a cousin of the Percies, was employed to make the first overtures, frankly allowed as much, but ascribed these failings to a bad education, and assured Lady Leicester that marriage, and the good influences which would then be brought to bear upon the young lord, would soon correct these faults. His first letter on the subject is written from Cornbury Park, and dated March 27, 1637.

“MADAM,—If my Lord and you be not otherwise engaged for the marriage of my Lady Dorothy, I have commission to tender the match of my Lord Lovelace, now nearly out of his mother's wardship, and presently possessed of land and wealth enough, even in the primest parts of this kingdom; whereunto may well be added his own affection expressed

to the person and fame of that fair lady, your daughter, meriting, in my opinion, both regard and value. For although, peradventure, his breeding hath not been precisely of the best since his father's decease, yet being well inclined without all doubt, my Lord of Leicester's great wisdom, and the good example of your son, will soon set him into those courses that are fittest for his quality. Wherefore, I presume to wish that my Lord's absence in France may not protract some present resolution in this business, because there is mighty means made to draw this youth another way, and much more money offered in portion than is meet for you to give. But to conclude, whatsoever your Ladyship will be pleased to direct herein, shall be carefully endeavoured by,

“Madam, your Ladyship's most affectionate cousin,

“DANBY.”

Lady Leicester, it appears, was graciously pleased to entertain Lord Danby's proposal, and agreed that the young lord, whom her cousin insists is endowed with more sense of honour than is common for his years, should be presented to her brother, Lord Northumberland, at St. George's Feast, which was to be shortly held at Windsor, after which she herself was to fix a time for receiving him at Leicester House. In the meantime, like a prudent mother, she made careful inquiries as to the young man's antecedents. The result was not altogether satisfactory, as she informs her husband in the following letter, dated April 20th.

“My Lord Lovelace, I hear, will be in town this week, and I think shall be presented first to my brother, Northumberland, and then to us. His estate, my Lord Danby says, is £6000 a year, and he now enters on £3500. The rest his mother has, who they say is rich, and loves him very much. His person, I am told, is not to be disliked, nor he wants not wit, but has kept extreame ill company, and will sometimes drink to distemper himself. This is a foul fault, and would keep me from thinking on him at all, did I not hope that good advice and good conversation would bring him from any such delight; for his brothers-in-law, who are the best persons that he keeps with, do draw him to that vice, being

extreamlie addicted to it themselves. When I know more concerning him, you shall be further informed. I know you persuade me to leave this town only in consideration of the danger [from the plague then prevalent], and therefore I do not intend to remove until the King and Queen go from hence, because I apprehend that it is possible for me to do you some service here. I have received £100 from the Low Countries, which I think must be employed in paying interest money. £200 I have received from Hen. Crikendall, which is reserved only for the payment of workmen, having already begun to finish the upper rooms; the men do not work in the house, and can bring no danger to us. I do not conceive it to be at all dangerous for you to let the King know that you have spent much above his allowance, and that you cannot subsist without some addition; for I believe he will not think it reasonable that your fortune should be ruined in his service; and I think you may represent your condition so to him, as he shall find cause to grant you a supply. In my opinion you had best direct this request only to himself, but I shall submit to any way that you think better. Madam Croft is come hither, and I saw her yesterdaye. Sir William is extreamlie careful in what concerns Doll, and verie kind to us all. My Ladie Berkshire carries my sister now from all creatures, which is no trouble to me. And since I have nothing to say that merits another sheet of paper, I will in this give you a farewell, with more affection than can be declared by so ill an expresser as is your

“D. LEYCESTER.”

On the 12th of May she writes again, and mentions Lord Lovelace, who has that moment arrived to pay his respects, not, it appears, until after some considerable delay.

“My Lord Lovelace is at this instant here, and would fain make an excuse for his absence, which I have received with such an answer as he may understand to be a little cheek; what will come after it shall be delivered to you the next week.”

The young nobleman's manners, it is evident, did not commend themselves to her ladyship. Her next letter puts the matter plainly.

“Now concerning Doll, of whom I can neither say what I desire, nor what I thought I should have done ; for I find my Lord Lovelace so uncertain and so idle, so much addicted to mean companie and so easilie drawn to debaucherie, as it is now my studie how to break off with him, in such a manner as it may be said that we refused him ; for since Sundaie last we have not seen him, though he be everye day verie neare us. Manie particulars I could tell you of his wildness, but the knowledge of them would be of no use to you, since he is like to be a stranger to us ; for though his estate is good, his person prettie enough, and his wit much more than ordinarie, yet dare I not venture to give Doll to him. And concerning my Lord of Devonshire, I can saie as little to please you ; for though his Mother and Sister made faire shows of good intentions to us, yet in the ende we find them just as I expected, full of deceite and juggling. The sister is gone from this towne, but the young Lord is still here, who never visited us but once ; and yet all the towne spoke of a marriage, which, I think, came upon my Lord of Holland’s divulging his confidence that it would be so ; and he conceives that he had much reason to believe what he did. My dear Hart, let not these cross accidents trouble you, for we do not know what God has provided for her ; and howsoever let us submit to His Will, and confess that His benefits are far beyond our deserts, and His punishments much less than we have reason to expect.”

Dorothy herself seems to have taken a dislike to Lord Lovelace from the first. Her natural goodness made her recoil from the thought of union with this worthless youth. She shrank instinctively from him as she had shrunk from Waller. But several of her parents’ friends and relatives were eager for the match, and used every means in their power to overcome Lady Leicester’s scruples and Dorothy’s repugnance. Henry Percy, above all, was keenly alive to the worldly advantages of the marriage, and left no stone unturned to bring it about. His efforts were in vain. Both his sister and niece, he complains to Lord Leicester, were utterly unreasonable, and not even a visit which he paid them at Penshurst that summer could effect his object.

"I am now come from Penshurst," he writes from Oatlands, on the 27th of July, "whither I went, both out of inclination and command. I heard the marriage was broken before I went, but hoped to have found the reasons there, which were not so satisfactory as I expected or desired, yet my sister as confident, as reason and justice could make her, on the contrary. And my Lady Dorothy was so poisoned by the same persons, with ill reports, which I never could hear any ground for, that she abhorred the man without any farther examination. Now, if the ill be taken upon trust, and the good be strictly examined, she or her friends will with difficulty be satisfied with any body. After much debate, she is come as far as to say he may behave himself so that she will esteem him; and my sister commands me, if he can be brought to acknowledge his faults some dexterous way, and be made to pursue that, by giving them all kind of satisfaction, he may be again admitted."

A month later he owns that he has given up the task in disgust.

"Aminta's sister" [a name sometimes given in these letters to Lady Leicester, whose sister, Lady Carlisle, is always spoken of as Aminta] "was resolved the other day to have the match go forward, and to that purpose gave instructions and powers to conclude, so far as I could, with Lovelace; the next week contradicts all that again, upon some thing that hath been told her, which certainly had little ground, but proceeded from irresolution in herself, and an over-believing in I know not whom. This makes me resolve to have nothing to do in it, for I see noe possibility of pleasing the Sister of Aminta, and the Niece of Aurelius [Henry Percy]."

"H. PERCY.

"OATLANDS, *August the 24th, 1637.*"

There the matter ended, not, however, without a good deal of heart-burning and bad feeling on both sides. Lady Leicester complained bitterly of her brother's unkindness, and told her husband that he had not only failed to stand by his niece on this occasion, but had actually taken part

against her. She herself, poor lady, was sorely disappointed at the failure of her plans for Dorothy, and had besides many other causes for anxiety. As usual, money was short, and the reports which reached her of intrigues at Court made her fearful for her husband's safety. She mistrusted Lord Holland with good reason, and warned Lord Leicester to be careful in his correspondence with him. And she herself in her anxiety to defend her absent lord, addressed a letter to the Queen in a style which, to Henry Percy at least, did not seem altogether becoming, although he tells Leicester that it was passed over as merely "coming from a kind wife."

Here, unfortunately, Lady Leicester's letters to her husband cease, and from this time all we can find of her minute and regular correspondence is a fragment which has been preserved in the *Life of Hammond*. This illustrious divine had been appointed Rector of Penshurst in 1633. Lord Leicester, it appears, heard him preach before the King at Whitehall, on one occasion, and was so much struck by his eloquence and goodness that he presented him to the living as soon as it fell vacant. The Earl's choice may have been further influenced by the fact that Dr. Hammond's sister had married his old friend, Sir John Temple, the son of Sir Philip Sidney's faithful secretary and companion, Sir William Temple. Like his father, in whose arms the dying hero had breathed his last, Sir John Temple was deeply attached to the Sidney family, and his letters to the absent nobleman show what a true and loyal friend he proved both to Lord and Lady Leicester. No appointment, however, could have been more fortunate for Penshurst. Hammond proved an ideal Christian pastor, and endeared himself to his parishioners by his affectionate care for their souls and bodies. He was zealous in the discharge of his priestly office; read prayers daily, morning and evening, in church; celebrated Holy Communion on Sundays and holidays, and catechized the school-children regularly in church before Evensong. His charity to the poor was unbounded. He sold corn at a low price in times of scarcity, and when one summer the crops of a farmer were ruined by a bad flood, he remitted the tithe due to him, saying he could not take a tenth from his neighbour, since he

had lost the other nine parts. At the same time he rebuilt the rectory, which had been allowed to fall into ruin, and planted the garden and orchards which still surround the charming old house. Here he spent ten happy years, with his old mother to keep house for him, and the books which were the favourite companions of his leisure hours, until the troubles of the Civil Wars began. Then, as we shall find, he was driven from his beloved home, and "although he would have minded nothing so much as a return to his old charge," he was never able to come back to Penshurst.

It is amusing to find that although at Court Hammond's eloquence as a preacher had been highly praised, and the King himself pronounced him the most natural orator he had ever heard, Lady Leicester was dissatisfied with his sermons, and made severe remarks upon them. In this letter to her husband, dated December 4th, 1638, she observes: "Mr. Herbert Croft [afterwards successively Dean and Bishop of Hereford] is here at this present, who preached to us on Sunday extraordinarily well. Mr. Hammond, in my opinion, is much mended in the performance of that work since you left us." The truth is that Hammond, as we learn from his biographer, had great difficulty in preaching without notes, and "found it harder to get one sermon by heart than to pen twenty," but persevered in the practice of preaching extempore sermons, as better suited to the village folk at Penshurst.

That winter Lady Temple died at her brother's house at Penshurst, and the same day on which Lady Leicester addressed the above-mentioned letter to her lord, the widower, Sir John Temple, wrote a long epistle to Lord Leicester, in which he speaks warmly of the kindness which had been shown him and his wife by her ladyship, who had been deeply attached to Dr. Hammond's sister.

"I know your Lordship," he writes, "hath understood of the sad condition it hath pleased the Lord to cast me into, since my return into these parts. Your Penshurst was the place where God saw fit to take from me the desire of mine eyes, and the most dear companion of my life—a place that must never be forgotten to me, not only in regard of those blessed ashes that lie now treasured up there: and my desires

that by your Lordship's favour, *cum fatalis et mea dies venerit*, I may return to that dust : but in respect also of the extraordinary civilities I there received from your incomparable lady, whose affection and large expressions to that blessed soul now at rest, whose passion for her departure, and whole commiseration of my sorrow, so far surpasseth any retribution or acknowledgement of mine acts. If I could pretend or ever hope to merit anything at your Lordship's hands, I should presume to draw you into the obligation ; or at least most earnestly beg this favour, that your Lordship would be pleased so far to descend unto my interest as to take notice of my sense and due acknowledgements, and transmit them back to her Ladyship, that so they, receiving some value from your Lordship's hand, may, how inconsiderable soever in themselves, find a favourable reception here. I am now returning to my former attendance at Court, and if your Lordship can imagine how I may serve you there, you cannot do me a greater favour than to lay your commands upon me. I have ever had a great passion to your service ; and my ambitions are of no larger extent than to render myself capable of it."

Sir John was as good as his word, and in the long letters which he addressed to Lord Leicester during the remainder of his absence abroad, kept him well informed of events at Court, and showed that he at least lost no opportunity of forwarding his noble friend's interests. He left his own young son at Penshurst to be educated by his uncle, and so the lad, afterwards the famous Sir William Temple, grew up on close terms of intimacy with the Sidneys. This friendship lasted throughout their future lives. Sir William's letters abound in allusions to Lord Leicester, for whom he had the highest respect, as well as to his sons, Lord Lisle and Algernon and Henry Sidney. Both Lord Lisle and Henry Sidney, with whom his diplomatic missions brought him into frequent relations, were among his most constant correspondents. His wife, that charming Dorothy Osborne whose letters are familiar to us all, also became friendly with the ladies of the family. Sir William himself, in his youthful days, had been one of Sacharissa's most ardent admirers, and made no secret of the regard he retained for her in later days. His betrothed

bride often alludes playfully to his silent adoration of this fair lady, in whom all perfections were supposed to meet. If she praises Lady Ann Wentworth, whom she calls the finest lady she knows, she hastens to add, with that arch smile we know so well, "*One* always excepted," and when she sends her lover her own portrait, at his request, begs that it may not presume to disturb my Lady Sunderland's, which always hangs in his closet.

CHAPTER VII

1638—1639

Dorothy's Letters—Lord Spencer—Dorothy's Marriage.

THE earliest of Dorothy Sidney's own letters, of which we have been able to find any trace, belong to 1638. During that year she wrote three times to her father at Paris, addressing him in the formal style then employed by young people in approaching their parents. But although these short notes do little more than express the dutiful sentiments which a well-brought-up daughter might be expected to entertain for her father, they are interesting as the only specimens we have of her correspondence in her maiden days. We give them all three in full.

“MY LORD,—Those few words I have, cannot express how much joy I am possessed with, when I receive any mark of your Lordship's favour, which you are pleased to allow me in my Lady's letters. I am too well acquainted with your Lordship's goodness to have any apprehension that you will be less willing to bestow them, when you find that it makes her perfectly happie, who with all the truth and sincerity that any affection or obligation can produce, professes to be eternally your Lordship's most humble and most obedient child,

“ D. SIDNEY.

“ PENSURST, *February 20, 1638.*”

“MY LORD,—If your Lordship had commanded me something that I had no inclination to of myself, I should show

my obedience more than in this ; but to follow the example of my Lady, that hath my ambition ever aspired to, and my great desire, I hope, will make me capable of the good advice that she is pleased to bestow upon me ; and then I will not apprehend that I shall be deprived of the honour to be esteemed your Lordship's most humble and most obedient child,

“ D. SIDNEY.

“ *March, 23rd, 1638.*”

The third was apparently written to thank her father for some gifts of jewellery which he had sent her from Paris.

“ MY LORD,—Had not my intentions been diverted by the trouble of a distemper which a great cold produced, and since that by the expectation of Rochelle's [Lord Leicester's messenger] coming hither, I would not have been thus slow in presenting your Lordship with my most humble thanks for the many fine things that you have bestowed on me. And though they will be my greatest ornaments, which is of much consideration by persons no wiser than I am, they could not give me any contentment, but as I understand they are expressions of your Lordship's favour, a blessing that above all others in this world I do with most passion desire ; and my ambition is, that whatsoever your Lordship doth propound to be in the perfectest good child upon the earth, you may find accomplit in me, that will ever be your Lordship's most affectionate, most humble and exactly obedient,

“ D. SIDNEY.

“ PENSURST, *December 29, 1638.*”

A letter which Sir John Temple writes to Lady Leicester from his house at Battersea, two months afterwards, hints at a possible renewal of negotiations with Lord Devonshire, on the subject of his marriage with Dorothy. Sir John is urgent that her ladyship should come to town at once, both with a view to this affair and to another which in his eyes is yet more important, and which, as might be expected, concerns her husband's advancement at Court. So he writes in pressing terms—

“MADAME,—I am ready to mutiny that I yet hear nothing of your Ladyship’s coming up. I want my Oracle whereunto I should repair, and without your Ladyship’s advice I know not how further to govern myself in these two particulars that concern your service her. I have, as I writte unto your Ladyship in my last, done whatsoever I could in my owne judgment possibly imagine was fit to stirr up that old man’s spirits, presently to interest himself in that concerning my Lord Devonshire, and howsoever he doth exceeding affectionately embrace it and seems extremely to desire it, yet what through his natural slowness and the multitude of business these new embroilments cast upon him, although my Lord of Devonshire came to his chamber to visit him the last weeke, when he was above at the Council, yet all we can do will not infuse civility enough into him to go waite on his Lordship; but I believe it will not be long ere they meet, and as soon as I see his business a little over, I will renew my solicitations of him again.”

We do not know who the dilatory old man who needed so much pressure from Sir John may have been, but in any case his good offices with Lord Devonshire were of small avail, and Lady Leicester’s pet scheme for Dorothy was doomed to failure. Sir John proceeds to unfold the particulars of his other scheme, by which Lord Leicester was to become Secretary of State on the resignation of Mr. Coke, an event that was then daily expected.

“I verily believe,” he adds, “by what I hear and discern in Court, that he [Mr. Secretary Coke] will not long continue in his place; the times are changed, and as the affairs of the King require a more active man, so there are not wanting those about his Majestie, who for their owne ends will sufficiently put him in mind of it. Therefore my opinion is that there must something presently be done in it; the time is now proper, and opportunity will admitt of no long delays. I shall therefore most humbly beseech your Ladyship to resolve in what way to put it speedily on; I doubt not but you will have strength enough to compasse this designe if it be well managed. One thing give me leave to advise your Ladyship, which is to write to my Lord of it, and desire him

to send unto your Ladyship what instructions or directions he shall think proper for the promotement of this business, if when you come up to London you see fitt to putt it on. If my Lord were now upon the place, I should make no manner of question to see it suddenly effected, but as things now stand I have very great hopes that your Ladyship's endeavours will prevaile."

Three days later, this zealous friend wrote to Lord Leicester in the same urgent strain—

"And further give me leave to tell your Lordship," he adds, "that I thinke this the proper time to move in, so as if you neglect now to stir, you will have some evil Angel take the opportunitie while the waters are troubled, to help in some Stigmatiche, or otherwise inferior person. I have written to this effect to my Lady, in whose vigilancy and discerning spirit your Lordship is so incomparably happy, as I am persuaded nothing will be wanting to the effecting of this businesse, but your Lordship's presence, which I conceive would have a powerful influence into the present occasion, yet do I hope it may be happily accomplished by that partie and strength her Ladyship can draw together here. . . . For, as my desires to serve your Lordship in this particular are extraordinary, so I must ingenuously confess that my zeal for the publick contributes much in the fervency of them. I cannot without much regret think of the present condition of these times, and the weak constitution of this State to beare those shockes and violent concussions it is like to encounter withal. We had neede of able men, by main strength to carry it through; otherwise it may peradventure perish in our dayes, *et nous accabler en sa ruine.*"

These last words show how grave the crisis was in the eyes of thoughtful statesmen, and how darkly the future loomed before them. Whatever Lord Leicester thought of his chances of promotion, he yielded so far to Sir John's entreaties as to beg the King's leave to come to England for three weeks' or a month's holiday, pleading urgent private business as his excuse. Charles consented readily, and on the 14th of March Lord Leicester took leave of the French king, and shortly afterwards crossed from Dieppe in a vessel sent to meet him.

The King however himself left London a week later, to march against the Scottish Covenanters, and Leicester followed him to York in obedience to the royal command. He was received with every sign of favour, and honoured by repeated marks of the King's confidence. But his advice proved unpalatable at Court, according to the following account which he himself gives, in a manuscript preserved at Penshurst.

"In the year 1639, King Charles sent for me to come out of France, at the beginning of our unhappy troubles and differences with the Scots. I was then in good favour at the Court and made a Privy Counsellor, and the King commanded me to follow him to York, which I did; but it was not God's will that the King should follow the advice which I gave him to accommodate his differences with the Scots, and not to make war, where nothing was to be gained and much to be lost, which the world hath since found to be very true. The King then commanded me to return into France in the same quality of Ambassador Extraordinary, and there stay till further orders from him. So I returned to London."

The Earl, as he knew well, had enemies among the Queen's party, and had never been enough of a courtier to ingratiate himself with her Majesty. Both Charles and Henrietta Maria from this time looked coldly upon him, in spite of his past services, and it soon became evident that his friends had been too sanguine in their hopes of his advancement at Court.

"The King," wrote Lord Northumberland, "has peremptorily refused to make Leicester Secretary; what the reason should be I cannot imagine, except it proceed from the Archbishop [Laud], who certainly wishes not his preferment. But I hope we may hereafter prevail, though we have failed at this time. My Lord Deputy [Strafford] is still constant in his professions to Leicester, yet told my sister [Lady Carlisle] this would not be obtained."

On the other hand, one of Lady Leicester's most cherished wishes was about to obtain fulfilment, and during her lord's brief stay in England, he had the satisfaction of bringing the negotiations for his daughter's marriage to a happy conclusion. On the 20th of June, Sir John Temple, writing from Berwick,

where he had followed the King, congratulates his Lordship and my Ladie most affectionately on my Ladie Dorothy's most happy match. "No man," he adds, "hath more passionately desired it or hath been more really affected with the news of it than your Lordship's most humble and most faithful servant, J. TEMPLE."

The new suitor who now presented himself was Henry, Lord Spencer, a young man whose rank, fortune and character were such as to satisfy every requirement. His family traced their pedigree back to the De Spencers who had been Earls of Winchester and Gloucester in by-gone days. In the reign of Henry VIII. the branch which he represented had settled at Wormleighton in Warwickshire, where Sir John Spencer had built himself "a faire and great mansion house," of which some fragments are still standing. Sir John and his descendants were great sheep-farmers, and owned immense flocks and vast estates both in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. One of them, Sir Robert Spencer, soon after James I.'s accession, had given Queen Anne of Denmark and her young son, Prince Charles, a splendid reception at his Northamptonshire seat, Althorp, on which occasion a *Masque of Fairies*, written by Ben Jonson, was performed in the park. A few months afterwards Sir Robert was raised to the peerage as Baron Spencer. His son William, who succeeded him in 1627, had some years previously married Penelope Wriothsley, daughter of the brilliant and accomplished nobleman, Henry, Lord Southampton, the patron of Shakespeare and friend of Essex. This second Lord Spencer died in 1636, leaving his widow and thirteen children "inconsolable for the loss of the best of husbands, and the tenderest of fathers." These words were inscribed by Lady Spencer on the sumptuous black and white marble tomb which she reared to his memory in Brington Church. Her own effigy, clad in rich draperies and flowing veil, as well as that of her noble lord, was carved on the monument by the famous sculptor Nicholas Stone, and a beautiful full-length portrait of Penelope herself, in a pale blue silk robe, painted by Vandyke, hangs in the gallery at Althorp.

Her eldest son, named Henry after his grandfather, inherited Lady Spencer's beauty of feature and the cultured tastes of her family. Born at Althorp in 1620, he was educated under his parents' eyes by a tutor who is described as crooked with age and harsh of temper. But the results of his severity proved excellent, and the boy never forgot the good principles that had been impressed upon his mind in early youth. At the age of sixteen he was sent to Magdalen College, where he received the degree of Master of Arts at the same time as Prince Rupert, on the occasion of a visit which Charles I. paid to Oxford in 1636. A few months afterwards he succeeded his father as third Baron Spencer, and from that time lived at Althorp, devoting himself to the management of his estates, under the guidance of his uncle and guardian, Thomas, Lord Southampton, one of the truest and best of Charles I.'s servants. His own studious tastes and virtuous inclinations, as much as the careful training which he had received, preserved him from the wild and reckless dissipation to which the gilded youth of the day for the most part gave themselves up. Wise and thoughtful beyond his years, he took delight in the company of older men, and never adopted the licentious habits which were too often held by his contemporaries to go hand in hand with good-fellowship and wit. The welfare of his servants and tenants was the great object of his care, and both his own conduct and that of his household were ordered on a pattern of almost Puritan strictness.

Such was the young Lord Spencer who, before he had completed his nineteenth year, became the accepted suitor of Dorothy Sidney. This time there was no hesitation on her part. Here was a lover as gentle and as handsome as he was brave. He shared all her quiet and simple tastes, and loved study and retirement as much as she did. His nature was as thoughtful and serious, his character as pure and noble as her own. And for once Lady Leicester must have felt that her motherly anxieties were set at rest, and that her best prayers for her child had been answered. It would have been hard indeed to find a husband better worthy of her "deare Doll,"—one who combined all the worldly advantages which

she held necessary, together with the excellence of character which she knew by experience it would be ill to dispense with. And the connection must have been the more pleasing to both Dorothy's parents, since Lord Spencer's grandfather had been so faithful a friend to the unfortunate Essex, Lady Leicester's own uncle, and the intimate ally of the Sidneys.

Unfortunately no letters remain to show us how the marriage came about, how the wooing was done, and Sacharissa's hand and heart were at length won. All we know is that Lady Leicester made very advantageous offers to Lord Spencer's mother, and that these were accepted without delay. The marriage, it was agreed, should take place at once, although the bridegroom was barely nineteen, and it would be two more years before he took his place in the House of Lords, and entered on the full enjoyment of his estates and fortune.

On the 20th of July, when the roses were in bloom, and the woods of Penshurst were in all their midsummer glory, the wedding took place. There was a great company assembled at Penshurst, in honour of the occasion, and the event was celebrated by a very witty and very famous letter from Mr. Edmund Waller. Lady Dorothy's old lover had long ago given up his suit, and following Apollo's advice had hung up his lute to go in search of other themes and nymphs less cruel than Sacharissa, but the occasion was too good a one to pass by, the event too auspicious not to be commemorated by his muse. So he took up his pen and addressed the following effusion on the loss of his mistress to the bride's fair young sister, Lady Lucy Sidney.

“MADAM,—In this common joy at Penshurst, I know none to whom complaints may come less unreasonable than to your Ladyship, the loss of a bed-fellow being almost equal to that of a mistress, and therefore you ought at least to pardon, if you consent not to, the imprecations of the deserted, which just Heaven no doubt will hear! May my Lady Dorothy (if we may yet call her so) suffer as much and have the like passion for this young Lord whom she has preferred to the rest of mankind, as others have had for her! And may this

love, before the year go about, make her taste the first curse imposed on womankind,—the pains of becoming a mother! May her first-born be none of her own sex, nor so like her, but that he may resemble her Lord as much as herself!

“May she, that always affected silence and retiredness, have the house filled with the noise and number of her children; and hereafter, of her grandchildren! And then may she arrive at that great curse, so much declined by fair ladies—old age! May she live to be very old, and yet seem young; be told so by her glass, and have no aches to inform her of the truth! And when she shall appear to be mortal, may her Lord not mourn for her, but go hand in hand with her to that place where we are told there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage; that being there divorced, we may all have an equal interest in her again! My revenge being immortal, I wish all this may also befall their posterity to the world’s-end and afterwards!

“To you, Madam, I wish all good things; and that this loss may in good time be happily supplied with a more constant bed-fellow of the other sex. Madam, I humbly kiss your hands, and beg pardon for this trouble from,

“Your Ladyship’s most humble servant,

“EDMUND WALLER.”

CHAPTER VIII

1639—1642

Lady Leicester and Lady Spencer at Paris—Birth of Children—Return to England—The Civil War.

LORD LEICESTER was present at the marriage of his "deare Doll," but returned to Paris immediately afterwards.

"During my abode in London," he says in his Journal, "a marriage was concluded between my eldest daughter, Dorothy Sidney, and the Lord Spencer, which was consummated at Penshurst the 20th July, 1639. Being to return to France, as I did in August, I took my son Robin Sidney with me, who was then about thirteen years old."

He was followed at Michaelmas by his wife, with her two eldest unmarried daughters, Lucy and Anne, and the young married pair—"my new son-in-law and his wife," as Lord Leicester calls them. The other daughters "being very young, the eldest about ten years old," were left at Penshurst with a gentlewoman, their governess, sister to Sir Dodmore Cotton.

Soon after her arrival in Paris, Lady Leicester fell dangerously ill of a fever, and for some time her whole family were full of concern for her safety. Her brother, Lord Northumberland, always a true and loyal friend both to her and to Lord Leicester, wrote repeatedly to make anxious enquiries.

"My sister's recovery," he says in one letter, "is the thing in the world I do most earnestly desire; therefore till I be well assured of it I cannot be without much affliction."

A week later he writes again, thankful for better accounts :

“The good news of my sister’s amendment hath brought me unexpressible joy, for I confess I had great apprehensions of her danger ; a little time with her temper and good government will, I trust, restore her unto perfect health.”

And even Lady Carlisle was moved by the news of her sister’s danger, and wrote in quite affectionate terms to Lord Leicester.

“MY LORD,—It is a great pain to me that you have got no more certainty of my sister’s health, and I fear your Lordship gives me your greatest hopes. My best consolation is, that you say she is cheerful, for that is not her humour, of great indisposition, without her being with your Lordship make that change. I beseech you, let me again hear from your Lordship the next week, for till I am free from those fears I can think of nothing else, which I am confident will make you love me and believe me more yours ever.

“*October 17, 1639.*”

As soon, however, as she heard of her sister’s recovery she employs her on business of her own, and begs her to do a commission for my Lord Deputy, her friend Strafford.

“I was desired by my Lord Deputy to send to some of your servants to buy him two beds, one of crimson velvet, and the other of warmest damask ; the crimson with silk fringe and the other with gold and silver ; but I, that dare say anything to you, will let you know that by giving this command to one of your servants, you will do him a huge favour. If you have found anything for a New Year’s Gift, send me word by the next, and let my Lady Spencer know that my indisposition kept me from writing to her. My Lord of Holland asks your pardon for not writing, being at Theobald’s with the King.”

In the same letter, “this busy stateswoman,” as Sir Philip Warwick calls her, assures her sister that she can answer for Lord Strafford’s goodwill to Leicester, which is of the first importance, and that she has succeeded in reconciling my Lord Deputy with her brother, Lord Northumberland, who is now admitted into the royal confidence, “called to all the greatest secrets of the King.” What is more, she is “very confident

that she can win over my Lord Deputy, as far as you please," in any contest between her sister's husband and Archbishop Laud, who was supposed to be opposed to Lord Leicester's advancement. Lord Northumberland's letters to his brother-in-law all insist on the high opinion which Strafford had of Leicester, and express the hope that he may still be chosen to succeed Secretary Coke. But the Queen's influence turned the scale, and on Sir John Coke's resignation in the spring of 1640, Sir Henry Vane, already Treasurer of the Household, succeeded to his office.

Meanwhile, Lord Northumberland wrote, the King's affairs were daily becoming more embroiled, and the difficulty of providing the Ambassador with supplies was every day greater.

"The Lord Deputy will, I verily believe, contribute all he can towards the obtaining of some consideration for 137 [Leicester], but the time is so unfortunate that I have small hopes of procuring any moneys out of the King's coffers. His wants are so great and the businesses that he is plunged into so many, that I foresee neither he nor his ministers will know how to master them, unless the Parliament be more liberal in their supplies to the King than they have ever been since my time. I know none so worthy of preferment nor so fit to serve the King as your Lordship; therefore the want of your assistance is a misfortune to us all. 'Tis very true that the new Secretary is much my friend, and will be useful to me, but he to whom I most earnestly wished that place would neither have been less friendly nor less useful."

Then comes the news of the King's unhappy breach with the Parliament, which made Lord Northumberland wonder what the world abroad would say. "It is impossible," he writes, "that things can continue in the condition they now are in; so general a defection in this kingdom hath not been known in the memory of any." For his own part it grieves his soul to be involved in such councils. "In fact," he adds, "the sense I have of the miseries that are like to ensue is held by some a disaffection in me." So threatening is the prospect, and so wretched and beggarly the condition of the King's finances, that he is inclined to think it may be less

prejudicial for Leicester to return home than to remain in France at his own expense.

In September 1640, Leicester received information of what he called the worst news that he had ever heard in his life, the march of the Scots across the border and their occupation of Newcastle. Already in Paris people began to talk as if England were half lost, and the Ambassador's mind was made uneasy by dark rumours of a secret understanding that existed between the French king and the Scottish rebels, which, it was said, might lead to a sudden invasion of England by the French army. Under the circumstances, no brave and loyal servant could think of leaving his post, and Leicester remained at Paris another year, keeping a vigilant eye on the French Court, and anxiously watching the course of events at home.

His family remained with him, and here in the summer Lady Spencer gave birth to her first child, a daughter, who received the name of Dorothy after her mother and grandmother, and who was in future years to become the wife of the great statesman Halifax. The poet Waller's prophecy as to the noise and number of her children seemed likely to be fulfilled, for in the following year this daughter's birth was followed by that of a son, who was named Robert, after Lord Leicester. This boy, born at Paris in 1641, became the famous Lord Sunderland who played so great a part in the cabals of Charles II.'s and James II.'s reigns, and in the Revolution to which William III. owed his accession. The same year saw the birth of Henry Sidney, Lady Leicester's fourth son and youngest child. The uncle and nephew who were so near of an age, and were destined to be close allies in the tangled paths and crooked ways of political life, thus spent their childhood together and grew up, first at Paris, and afterwards at Penshurst, in the same nursery. Lady Leicester always had an especial affection for this child of her old age, and Dorothy herself looked on this brother, who was twenty-four years younger than herself, with more of a mother's than a sister's feeling. There is a picture of him at Penshurst, as a child with long, fair ringlets and bare legs, holding a dog in a leash. Already we see traces of that remarkable beauty which

was one day to make him the curled and petted darling of all the Court ladies, "le beau Sidney" of Grammont's *Memoirs*.

Meanwhile, in England events were hastening on towards the long-expected crisis, and, the storm was about to burst. In May 1641, Strafford met his doom. From the beginning of the proceedings against him, Lord Northumberland had dreaded the worst, and although he had never been one of his party, could not but admire the man's intrepid bearing in the face of his foes.

"I cannot forbear to mention the hasty and violent proceedings against my Lord Lieutenant," he wrote in November 1640, "and I fear he will be prosecuted with as much eagerness as ever man was, for a greater and more universal hatred was never contracted by any person, than he hath drawn upon himself. He is not at all dejected, but believes confidently to clear himself, in the opinion of all equal and indifferent-minded hearers, when he shall come to make his defence. The King," he adds, "is in such a strait, that I do not know how he will possibly avoid, without endangering the loss of the whole kingdom, the giving way to the removal of divers persons, as well as other things that will be demanded by the Parliament."

Strafford himself is said to have recommended Lord Leicester as the best and most fitted of all the King's servants to succeed him in his post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Northumberland strongly supported the idea, and Charles, whose mind had for some time past been prejudiced against him, now began to feel the importance of rallying round him all those in whose integrity he could trust. Accordingly, in May 1641, Leicester was suddenly summoned home, and received his formal appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, five days only after the death of Strafford.

"In May 1641," he says in his Journal, "I came into England by the King's special commandment, and the death of my Lord of Strafford happening at that time, the King to perform his promises often made unto me, to employ and advance me further in his affairs, declared me Governor of Ireland, at the Council Table, and soon after gave me

commission under the Great Seal of England to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."

In obedience to the King's command, Leicester returned to France in August, to wind up his affairs, and bring away his family. A large part of his furniture, and many of his servants were sent straight to Ireland, where he expected shortly to join them, after he had seen the King on his return from Scotland.

Early in October he finally took leave of the Court where he had so long represented his master, not without receiving many marks of esteem and friendship from the French king. Louis XIII. himself wrote a letter to Charles I. in which he spoke in the warmest terms of Lord Leicester, saying that his care, wisdom and ability had always given him the greatest satisfaction. And in his journal the Ambassador adds—

"At my coming away the French king gave me a jewell valued at £1200, and the Queen of France gave my wife another jewell valued at £600, but hardly worth so much."

His family returned with him to London, including his married daughter and son-in-law and their young children. A few days afterwards Lord Spencer, who had now come of age, made his first appearance in the House of Lords, and spoke on the popular side with an eloquence and wisdom which attracted general attention. His wife's uncle, Lord Northumberland, was struck by the capacity which his young relative showed, and from that time treated him with marked kindness. There was a gentleness and moderation in Lord Spencer's language, together with an honesty and sincerity of purpose, which impressed both parties favourably, and made him popular with the best men on either side. Lord Falkland, who had lately become a conspicuous leader of the Royalist party, honoured him with his friendship, and Clarendon spoke of him as a young man "of tender years and an early judgment."

But as the struggle grew fiercer, and it became plain that an open breach between the King and the Parliament was imminent, Lord Spencer hesitated. His name appeared among the Lord Lieutenants appointed by Parliament to levy the Militia, and the popular leaders hoped to see him follow Lord

Northumberland's example and, with him, espouse their cause. But the violence of their language, and their open attacks on the King, stirred the chivalry of the young man's nature. He, for one, declared that no power on earth would ever induce him to draw his sword against the King, and employed all his eloquence to induce the lords to come to terms with Charles. In common with his uncle, Lord Southampton, and a few other loyal peers, he did his utmost to heal the daily widening breach, and implored the popular leaders to pause before they plunged into a war which he held to be the worst misfortune which could befall the country.

Some fragments of his speeches on this occasion have been preserved by Lloyd in his *Memorials of Distinguished Loyalists*. He advised those who blamed the King's retreat to "lure him home by their loving behaviour, and not to do as those troublesome women who by their hideous outcries drive their wandering husbands further off." He told them that he "pitied not them that bemoaned his Majesty's distance," and whereas they expected to be commended for their patience under so great a punishment, he condemned them for deserving it, urging Seneca's words: *Nihil Rex male parentibus majus minari potest, quam ut abeat de regno.*"

He was often heard to say that another seven years would show that the King was the true commonwealth-man, and in the last speech which he delivered at Westminster, he ended with the words, "We had been satisfied long ere this, if we did not ask things that deny themselves, and if some men had not shuffled demands into our propositions on purpose that we may have no satisfaction."

And when at length the inevitable moment came, and it became necessary to declare for the King or for the Parliament, true to his word young Lord Spencer was among the thirty-two peers who, with Falkland, Colepepper, Hyde, and sixty members of the House of Commons, left Westminster and joined the King at York. At the same time, he placed not only his sword, but his fortunes at his royal master's service, and lent Charles a sum of £5000 for his immediate use. The die was cast, and henceforth he had pledged his life to the service of the King for good or ill. But how bitterly he

grieved to draw the sword against his old friends and comrades, and how much that was repulsive to his nature he found in his new surroundings, we learn from his own letters.

Never was a family more divided than that of the Sidneys, when the war broke out. While Dorothy's husband and his uncle Southampton declared for the King, both her brothers, Phillip Lord Lisle and Algernon Sidney, after serving some time in Ireland, came to London and took up arms for the Parliament. Her uncle Lord Northumberland from the first took the same side, while Lord Essex, the son of Queen Elizabeth's favourite and first cousin to Lady Leicester, became the general of the Parliamentary forces.

Lord Leicester, who had remained in town, by the King's desire, to obtain the necessary supplies of money and troops for Ireland, himself joined Charles at York in July. But he was well known to favour the moderate party, and for a time endeavoured to serve both the King and the Parliament. He now experienced, to his cost, the perils and misery arising from this state of divided counsels. Between his dependence upon the King and the Parliament, his situation was in the highest degree unpleasant. The rebellion which had broken out in Ireland, the terrible state of that unhappy country, demanded his presence immediately, but although several months had elapsed since he had received his commission he sought in vain to obtain the royal authority for his departure. Day after day he repeated his application both to the King himself and to his Secretaries, and each time his request met with the same assurance of speedy fulfilment. But the days became weeks and the weeks became months, and still his orders never came. The Court moved to Nottingham, and thither Leicester followed, only to find his efforts meet with no better success.

"I obeyed his Majesty," he wrote to Lord Northumberland, in a letter which was afterwards published by order of the Parliament, "and came after him to this town, where I have attended ever since, perpetually soliciting to be dispatched, and beseeching his Majesty that I might either go to my employment or have his leave to retire myself to my owne house and private condition; that if he were unwilling to

trust me in an employment of so great importance, I did beseech him that I might be no burden to his thoughts, and that he would be so gracious to let me know his resolution ; for I conceived myself to be under a heavy censure both of the Parliament and of the whole kingdome, whilst possibly they might think it my fault that I was so long absent from that charge which I had undertaken."

And to his sister-in-law, Lady Carlisle, he wrote also from Nottingham, two days after the stormy and tempestuous evening which had seen the raising of the Royal Standard : "I am environed by such contradictions as I can neither get from them nor reconcile them. The Parliament bids me go presently, the King commands me to stay till he dispatch me. The supplies of the one and the authority of the other are equally necessary. I know not how to obtain them both, and am more likely to have neither ; for now they are at such extremes as to please the one is scarce possible, unless the other be opposed. I cannot expect the Parliament should supply me, because it is not confident of me ; and as little reason is there to think that the King will authorise me, for he is as little confident. The one says, Why should we give money and arms which may be employed against us ? And the other says, Why should I give power and authority which may be turned against me ? Yet this is certain, that the Parliament must trust and supply me ; the King must trust and authorise me ; or else I can do nothing but help to make myself unhappy. I ever thought that a man might be wiser in his own conceit than in others' judgments, and that peradventure I was as like to offend that way as any other ; but I conceived that anybody might know better than another how near he himself comes unto an honest man ; and I thought I might do so too ; but now I begin to doubt of that, for I am suspected and disturbed of either side by those whom I never betrayed nor deceived, neither have I ever offended either of them, but in my desires and endeavours to serve both. How soon I shall get myself out of this labyrinth I cannot tell your Ladyship."

A fortnight later he writes again, still from the King's camp at Nottingham, and still in the same hopeless predicament.

“MADAME,—We are now about the equinoctial, a time which by natural reservedness suspends itself from declaring for day or night, for summer or for winter. Methinks the condition of our affairs is not unlike it, for whether it will continue unto us the pleasant peace wherein we have lived, or lead us into a hideous warre, they are better both astronomers and politicians than I am that can tell. I know what I wish and what I labour for, with the little meanes that God hath given me, but I have small hope of it, though others much more able employ themselves to the same end with me. I fear it is not so much a malignant party, as malignant fate that guides us. For aught I see, we know not what we do, nor what we would have, unless it be our own destruction. Incertitude, the most grievous thing to the mind of man, is that wherein I languish, for I do not know that I am sure of anything, but of being your Ladyship’s most faithful and obedient servant,

“LEICESTER.

“NOTTINGHAM, 12th September, 1662.”

The tone of these letters, it must be owned, certainly bears out Clarendon’s remarks on the “staggering and irresolution” in Leicester’s nature, which according to him was the chief cause of his misfortunes. The times were too hard for him, and he wanted that quick decision and power of instantaneous resolve which could alone have enabled him to fix on a mode of action, and steer his way steadily through the difficulties which beset his path. Besides this, he was of too honest and manly a nature to truckle to the Queen’s favourites, and be a party to their plots and intrigues. Again, both his relationship to Lord Northumberland, and the well-known intimacy which existed between the two noblemen, naturally excited a sense of distrust in the King’s mind, although even Clarendon, who was no friend of his, declares Leicester’s honour and loyalty to have been above suspicion.

At length, however, after prolonged delay, Charles gave him his final instructions, and in November the new Lord Lieutenant set out for Ireland. But when he reached Chester he fell dangerously ill, and before he had sufficiently recovered to be able to proceed on his journey, he received a fresh order

from the King, commanding him to join him at once at Oxford. He obeyed, after a fruitless protest, and returned to Oxford in December. There he remained through the whole of the following year, awaiting the King's pleasure and wearing his heart out in these useless delays, only to find in the end that his commission was revoked, and Lord Ormonde appointed Lord Lieutenant in his place. So bitterly did he experience the folly of putting his trust in princes, and so, as he moralized in after years, in his retreat at Penshurst, "it pleased God that that which should have been for his good, became unto him an occasion of falling; though not by his fault, as he could make appear to any reasonable person."

CHAPTER IX

1642—1643

Lord Sunderland's Letters—Edgehill—Oxford—Siege of Gloucester.

THE career of Sunderland—to call Sacharissa's husband by his most familiar name—in many respects resembles that of Lord Falkland, who fell with him on the field of Newbury. Like the elder and more illustrious nobleman, he at first joined the popular party, and was eager for reform, but like Falkland, when war became inevitable, he was moved by a chivalrous sense of loyalty to risk his life in the King's service. Like Falkland, Sunderland was one of the few Royalists who never ceased to labour for peace, but tried with all their might to effect a reconciliation between the Court and the Parliament. Like Falkland, he grew sick at heart in the hopeless task ; and like him too, an early death soon set him free from the turmoil and the strife that vexed his generous soul.

We know little of this admirable young man, but what we do know is sufficient to inspire us with the deepest interest in his character, and to make us realize the passionate grief of his wife at his early death. Five letters which he addressed to her, during the first year of the Civil War, have fortunately escaped destruction, and were discovered at Penshurst and published by Collins in the *Sidney Papers*. They are mostly written in a cypher which is often illegible, and the allusions are not always easy to understand, but they give us a delightful glimpse of the happy relations that

existed between this young husband and wife. Wherever he is, on the march to Birmingham, in the trenches before Gloucester, with the Court at Oxford, his thoughts are all of her. And although none of Dorothy's letters to her husband have come down to us, many passages in his own correspondence show how often he heard from her, and how constantly she thought of him.

"I know," said Lord Leicester, in the touching letter which he wrote to his widowed daughter when the tale of her short married life was for ever ended, "I know you lived happily, and so as nobody but yourself could measure the contentment of it."

Already they had two children, one of whom, the little daughter of whom her father speaks so fondly in his letters by her pet name of Popet, was old enough to be an object of constant delight and interest. He had just entered on the enjoyment of his large estates, and asked nothing better than to live quietly at Althorp, with his wife and children, in the peaceful home which was as congenial to Dorothy's tastes as to his own. Of him, indeed, it might be said, as it was of Falkland, "His condition of life before the war was so happy that it was hardly capable of improvement."

And now he had to leave all this, the quiet country home, the wife and children whom he loved so well, to mix with men whose society was, for the most part, utterly distasteful to him, and fight for a cause which, however preferable it might be to that of the Parliament, was still in his eyes but a choice of evils. "Publicans and sinners on the one hand," his friend Chillingworth said, "on the other, Scribes and Pharisees." The dislike which the young Cavalier from the first felt for his surroundings, and the longing of his heart for peace, breathes in every word of the two letters which he addressed to his wife in the autumn of 1642. The first was written on the 21st of September, from Shrewsbury, where the King had collected his forces after raising the standard at Nottingham. Dorothy and her children, it appears, had gone with her mother and sisters to Penshurst, and was shortly expecting the birth of a third child.

“MY DEAREST HART,—The King's condition is much improved of late ; his force increaseth daily, which increaseth the insolvency of the Papists. How much I am unsatisfied with the proceedings here, I have at large expressed in several letters. Neither is there wanting daily handsome occasion to retire, were it not for gaining honour. For let occasion be never so handsome, unless a man were reduced to fight on the Parliament side, than which, for my part, I had rather be hanged, it will be said without doubt that a man is afraid to fight. If there could be an expedient found, to save the punctilio of honour, I would not continue here an hour. The discontent that I, and many other honest men, receive daily, is beyond expression. People are much divided ; the King is of late very much averse to peace, by the persuasions of 202 and 111 [probably Prince Rupert and Lord Digby]. It is likewise conceived that the King has taken a resolution not to do anything in that way before the Queen comes, for people advising the King to agree with the Parliament was the occasion of the Queen's return. Till that time no advice will be received ; nevertheless, the honest men will take all occasions to procure an accommodation, which the King, when he sent those messages [by Southampton and Falkland] to the Parliament, did heartily desire, and would still make offers in that way but for 202, 111 [Rupert, Digby], and the expectation of the Queen, and the fear of the Papists, who threaten people. I fear 243 [the Queen's party, or Papists as they were called] have a much greater influence upon 83 [the King] than upon 343. What the King's intentions are, to those that I converse with, are altogether unknown ; some say he will hazard a battle very quickly, others say he thinks of wintering ; which as it is suspected, so if it were generally believed, I and many others with me would make no scruple to retire ; for I think it as far from gallant, either to starve with the King or to do worse, as to avoid fighting. It is said the King goes on Friday towards Chester, for a day or two, leaving his forces here ; which are 6000 Foot, 1500 Dragoons, and above 2000 Horse. There are 4000 Foot more raised, they say 2000 by

my Lord Strangford, 1000 by Sir Thomas Salisbury, and 1200 by Sir Edward Stradling; all which will be here within a very few days. This is a Lightning before Death.

"I am yours, etc.,

"SPENCER.

"SHREWSBURV, *the 21st September, 1642.*"

His fears proved true, and in a second letter to his wife, written on the march to Birmingham early in October, he tells her that the hope of peace is further off than ever. The King's cause is prospering, and he has little doubt they will reach London, but he sees that if this is the case the war-party will have it all their own way, and if they prevail, life in England will, he fears, be made intolerable for himself and all those who have dared oppose them and support moderate counsels. Whichever way he looks, the prospect is gloomy, and his only comfort is in thinking of his wife, and sharing his anxious thoughts with her.

"MY DEAREST HART,—I have received your letter of the 10th of this instant, but have had none else a good while, though you mentioned two others in this. Since we have been upon our march I have had neither time nor opportunity to write, but I sent Alibone [his Northamptonshire steward] yesterday to Althorpe, with a short letter to you, and a long one to my Lady [his mother, the Dowager Lady Spencer], for which trouble I beseech you to make my excuse. Above one more than this, I believe I shall not have time to write, and opportunity to send, before we come to London; which, by the Grace of God, will be as soon as so great an army can march so many miles. For not only 243 [the so-called Papists], but most men, believe that the King's army will make its way, although Lord Essex's army is five times as many as we are. If the King, or rather the Queen's party prevail, we are in sad condition, for they will be insupportable to all, but most to us who have opposed them, so that if the King prevails by force, I must not live at home, which is grievous to me, but more to you; but if . . . I apprehend I shall not be suffered to live in England. And yet I cannot fancy any way to avoid both; for the King is so awed by

the Papists, that he dares not propose peace or accept. I fear though, by his last message, he is engaged. But if that be offered by the Parliament, I and others will speak their opinion, though concerning the Treaty we were threatened by the Papists, who caused 99 to be commanded by the King, upon his allegiance, to return against his will, he being too powerful for those by whom England is now likely to be governed.

“Ever since the Duke’s going away, my Lord Southampton, who presents to you his service, has lain in the bed-chamber. For all the King never speaks to 43,104. I had above an hour’s discourse with the King about the Treaty, which I would be glad if you knew, but it is too long with cyphers and unfit without, else we have had no commerce since we came from Nottingham. I thank you for your care to supply me with money. I should be sorry not to see you till I wanted it, for yesterday I gave six score pounds for a horse of my cousin Clumseys, who kisses your hands. This may appear an argument that I shall want the sooner, but if I had been in danger of that, I would have ventured my body upon a worse horse. If I durst write thus freely of all things, you should have volumes, but by this constraint, I fear I have writt too much nonsense. For I can truly say of my writing in character, as a great man of this kingdom said of his speaking, that he never knew what he meant to speak before he spake, nor what he had said after he had spoken. Pray let my Lady Leicester know that to write news, without or with a cypher, is inconvenient ; ill compliments I dare not, and having heard her so often declaim against good ones, out of respect I forbear writing often to her. I hear that 116 [Leicester] has refused to show his instructions to the Parliament, without the King’s leave, which resolution I hope he will not alter, lest it should be prejudicial to him ; for the King is in so good condition at this time that if the Parliament would restore all his right, unless the Parliament would deliver up to legal trial all those persons named in his long list, and some others, he will not hearken to peace. I hope 134 [Northumberland] is in no danger, for besides the relation to him by you, I have been so obliged to him, that I very

often think of him. The Parliament's confidence, which you spake of in your letter, is put on, for really they are in ill condition, and it is impossible but they must know it. I never saw the King look better, he is very cheerful, and by the bandy discourse I thought I had been in the drawing-room. Money comes in beyond expectation. The Foot are reasonably well paid; the Horse have not been paid, but live upon the country. The King is very good of himself, and would be so still were it not for evil councillors, for he gives very strict orders that as little spoil be made as is possible. To-morrow we march to Birmingham, and so on the road to London, from whence, by the Grace of God, I will come to Penshurst, where I hope to see you past all your pains. I wrote to you last to desire you to invite all my sisters to you, for I doubt London will be shortly a very ill place. I am your and my Lady Carlisle's humble servant. You see I have not spared my pains, but unless you have received a letter that I writt to you from . . . you will not well understand the enclosed; pray keep it to yourself, for I send it you to have your opinion, whether it be ridiculous or no.

“ I am yours, etc.,

“ SPENCER.”

A week after this letter was written, Dorothy's husband was present at the first great battle of the Civil Wars on Edge Hill. The night before, he received Prince Rupert at his own “ faire house ” at Wormleighton, while the King was entertained at the neighbouring mansion of Edgcote, by Sir William Chauncy. On the following day, Lord Spencer fought gallantly in the King's Guards, that brilliant company of gentlemen nicknamed the Show Troop, from their splendid bearing and accoutrements, who that day obtained Charles' permission to leave his person and charge in the front of the battle.

The hard-fought fight, as we all know, was attended with no decisive result. Instead of the speedy march on London, which Rupert urged and Lord Spencer had confidently anticipated, Charles paused at Oxford, and gave the Parliamentary leaders time to prepare for resolute resistance.

But, during the course of the winter, Lord Spencer himself obtained leave to pay a short visit to Penshurst, and was once more able to embrace his wife and children. Here, on the 19th of November, Dorothy gave birth to a second daughter, who received the name of Penelope, after Lord Spencer's mother.

The beautiful portrait of Dorothy's husband, now at Althorp, was evidently painted about this time. It was the work of Walker, Cromwell's favourite artist, and is worthy of that excellent painter, who has given us such admirable portraits of the Protector himself, "with all the warts and pimples on his face." In Sunderland he had a subject which an artist of his merit could not fail to appreciate. A friend of the Sidneys himself, and well acquainted with Dorothy's two brothers, then serving on the Parliamentary side, he had no doubt good opportunities of knowing and studying the young Royalist lord. He has painted him in the armour worn by the Show Troop, with a broad lace collar falling over his steel cuirass, and flowing love-locks of rich brown hair—the very model of a peerless knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*. And he has missed nothing of the finer qualities which lay below the surface. The nobleness and seriousness of his nature, the sweetness and gentleness which had won Dorothy's heart, are all here. The brow is grave and thoughtful, the blue eyes are full of tenderness, and the handsome features are touched with a melancholy expression, as if the shadow of the end were already upon him, and he heard the voice that was so soon to summon him away.

But pleasant as it was to escape from the tumult of the Court and camp, from wrangling tongues and fighting troopers, and scenes of warfare and bloodshed, to the quiet shades of Penshurst and the bright presence of his wife and child, the young Cavalier might not linger long. Soon, too soon, the brief dream of happiness was over, and he hurried back to take his part in the fierce struggle to which he was pledged by honour and duty. Early in the summer we hear of him again with the King at Oxford, and in June 1643 he was created Earl of Sunderland, in reward for his distinguished services. But nothing could reconcile him to his

present position. Life at Court was even less to his taste than life in the camp, and active warfare seemed to him far preferable to the petty jealousies and intrigues, the flirtations and follies with which courtiers and fair ladies filled the colleges and halls of Oxford. More than ever he longed to escape from all of these, and find himself at Althorp again with Dorothy, in the green meadows and under the stately elms of his Northamptonshire home. But since this was impossible, he resolved to bring her to Oxford and find a house, the best that can be had there, so that Dorothy and his little daughter may be near him, and he may enjoy the presence which he so passionately desires. Now that Lord Leicester was at Oxford himself, and living in rooms in Queen's College, this plan seemed possible, and Sunderland looked forward with joy to their speedy meeting. Meanwhile her letters were his chief happiness, and in writing to her he found his greatest comfort. In July he was with the King's Horse before Bristol, and took part in the dashing attack which made that city open its gates to Prince Rupert. The whole of the west now declared for the King, and Gloucester was the only town which interrupted his communications with the north. Accordingly Charles laid siege to the town, and met with a more resolute resistance from its citizens than had been expected.

On August the 9th, Lord Sunderland wrote a short letter from Oxford, in which he acquaints his wife of the King's movements in this direction, and expresses his regret at Charles' determination to besiege Gloucester.

“MY DEAREST HART,—The King's sudden resolution of going before Gloucester hath extreamly disappointed me; for when I went from Bristol on Monday morning, he was resolved to come hither this day, and to that purpose sent his troupe before. Upon this, I and two or three gentlemen agreed to meet his Majesty here this day, and to take Bathe on our way, which we did accordingly, by which means we missed his Majesty, being gone this morning towards Gloucester, and to-morrow morning he will be before it, where I intend to waite upon him. The King's going to Gloucester

is, in the opinion of most, very unadvised. I find the Queen is unsatisfied with it; so is all the People of Quality. I am not able to give you any account upon what grounds the King took this resolution; it may be you will think that I am sparing of my paines, but really, had I any more to say I would set it down. You will receive two other letters from me, by this messenger, one of which I wrote before going hence, the other at Bristol; they are of so old a date that I should do you a great kindness to burn them; but because you often reproach me for failing in this kind of kindness I will send them, hoping that you will receive them kindly, according to the intention of him that wrote them, who is most passionately yours, etc.

“ August 9th, at Sunset, 1643.

“ I do most humbly kisse my Lady Leicester’s hands.”

His next letter is written about a fortnight later, from the trenches before Gloucester. Here, on the whole, he finds himself happier than in the gay company at Oxford, especially as he has Lord Falkland and his friend, the learned divine Mr. Chillingworth, for comrades.

“ MY DEAREST HART,—Just as I was coming out of the Trenches on Wednesday, I received your letter of the 20th of this instant, which gave me so much satisfaction, that it put all the inconveniences of this siege out of my thoughts. At that instant, if I had followed my owne inclinations, I had returned an answere to yours; writing to you, and hearing from you, being the most pleasant entertainment that I am capable of in any place; but especially here, where, but when I am in the Trenches (which place is seldom without my company), I am more solitary than ever I was in my life. This country being very full of little private cottages, in one of which I am quartered, where my Lord Falkland last night did me the honour to sup, Mr. Chillingworth is now here with me, in Sir Nicholas Selwin’s place, who has been this week at Oxford. Our little Engineer [Chillingworth] comes not hither so much out of kindness to me as for his own conveniency, my quarter being three or four miles nearer the

leaguer than my Lord of Devonshire's, with whom he staid till he was commanded to make ready his engines with all possible speed. It is not to be imagined with what diligence and satisfaction (I mean to himself) he executes this command; for my part I think it not unwisely done of him to change his profession, and I think you would have been of my mind if you had heard him dispute last night with my Lord of Falkland in favour of Socinianism, wherein he was, by his Lordship, so often confounded, that really it appears he has much more reason for his engines than for his opinions."

Chillingworth, who spent much of his time at Great Tew with his friend Lord Falkland before the war, had joined the King's army at Oxford, and had now suggested the construction of an engine after the fashion of the Roman *testudo* for use in the assault. But before his ingenious machine could be tried, the siege of Gloucester was raised, and in the following January "the little Engineer," as Sunderland affectionately calls him, died a prisoner in the hands of the Roundheads, from the effects of the privations he had suffered in the siege of Arundel.

"I put off my writing till last night, out of hopes that something here would have happened worthy your knowledge, more than what I writt to you the day before, and you see what good company made me defer it last night, at which time I was newly come from our Leaguer. . . . We had only an alarum, which they gave to hinder our working, not daring to sally any more, being so well beaten the last time; the night before they offered to make a sally, forty or fifty of them being without their sally port, but we instantly beat them back. Our gallery will be finished within this day or two, and then we shall soon dispatch our mine and them with it. Many of the soldiers are confident that we shall have the town within this four days, which I extreemly long for, not that I am weary of the siege. For really, though we suffer many inconveniences, yet I am not ill pleased at this variety, so directly opposite to one another as the being in

the Trenches with so much good company, together with the noise and tin-tamarre of guns and drums, the horrid spectacle and hideous cries of dead and hurt men, is to the solitariness of my quarter, together with all the marks of peace, which often brings into my thoughts (notwithstanding your mother's opinion of me) how infinitely more happy I should esteem myself quietly to enjoy your company at Althorpe, than to be troubled with the noises and engaged in the actions of the Court, which I shall ever endeavour to avoid. . . . I shall endeavour to provide you better lodgings at Oxford, and will be careful to furnish them according to your desire, which I forbear yet to do, because it is not yet certaine that we shall not take in Coventry and Northampton on our way to London. I have writ two or three letters to you since that which Alibone brought you, in one of which I took notice of Holdenby, by which I am more disoblighd than anything it was in ——'s power to do. 117 [Sunderland] was not at all concerned in it himself, but his principal design was so to order that business that 118 [Lady Sunderland] might have had it after him, who, should he die now, would be destitute of a good house. I am able to give you no account of the lords [the Earls of Bedford, Clare and Holland], nothing being resolved concerning them when I came from Oxford, more than that they should be very well used, but without doubt they will, ere long, be better received than they ought to expect. When we were at Bristol, Sir William [Crofts] was there, but I hear that he is now lately gone to Hereford, for which I envy him and all others, that can go to their own houses; but I hope ere long you will let me have your company and Popet's, the thought of which to me is most pleasant, and passionately desired by Yours, &c.

“August 25th, from before GLOUCESTER.

“Since I wrote this, I hear the King goes to-morrow to Oxford, from whence he will return on Monday. Sir William Killigrew is your servant, to whom the King has given the reversion of Pendennis Castle, after Arundell, who is threescore and ten, with which he is extreamply pleased, it being the thing in the world he most desired.”

The mysterious allusion to Holdenby House is a proof of the pains which Sunderland had taken to ensure the comfort of his wife, in case any harm should befall him. He had done his utmost to obtain possession of this fine old house, close to Althorp, so as to provide a home for Lady Sunderland in case she were left a widow. But his intentions in this respect had apparently been thwarted by some member of his or her family. The meaning of this passage, however, is not very clear, and several other sentences in the letter are illegible.

With the same foresight he had lately made his will, and settled £10,000 on his elder daughter, and £7000 on the younger one, while Lady Sunderland herself was liberally provided for, by a jointure on the Wormleighton property. His death, which took place within a month from the date of this letter, alone prevented him from carrying out his other wish, and securing her a permanent country house.

CHAPTER X

1643

Battle of Newbury—Death of Lord Sunderland—The News brought to Penshurst.

A WEEK after Sunderland had written to his wife from the trenches before Gloucester, the approach of Essex's army forced Charles to raise the siege of that town, which had held out in a manner contrary to all expectation. The young Earl's next letter was written at Oxford on the 16th of September. He had returned there for a few days, since there seemed no probability of an immediate battle, and had paid a visit to Lord Leicester, in his rooms at Queen's College. The first words of the letter have been destroyed, and it begins as follows—

“Since I wrote to you last from Sulbey we had some hopes one day to fight with my Lord of Essex's army, we receiving certaine intelligence of his being in a field convenient enough, called Ripple Field, towards which we advanced with all possible speed; upon which he retired with the body of his army to Tewkesbury, where by the advantage of the bridge he was able to make good his quarter, with five hundred men, against twenty thousand. So that though we were at so near a distance, as we could have been with him in two hours, his quarter being so strong, it was resolved on Thursday that we seeing for the present he would not fight with us, we should endeavour to force him to it by cutting off his provisions; for which purpose the best way was for the body of our army to go back to Evesholme, and for our horse to distress upon

him ; upon which I and many others resolved to come for a few days hither, there being no probability of fighting very suddenly, where we arrived late on Thursday night. As soon as I came, I went to your father's, where I found Alibone, with whose face I was better pleased than with any of the Ladies here. This expression is so much a bolder thing than charging my Lord Essex, that should this letter miscarry and come to the knowledge of our dames, I should, by having my eyes scratched out, be cleared from coming away from the army for feare, where if I had stayed, it is odds if I had lost more than one. Last night very good news came to Court, that we yesterday morning fell upon a Horse Quarter of the enemy's, and cut off a Regiment, and that my Lord of Newcastle hath killed and taken prisoners two whole Regiments of Horse and Foot that issued out of Hull; which place he hath great hopes to take ere long. By the same messenger, last night, the King sent the Queen word that he would come hither on Monday or Tuesday, upon one of which days, if he alter his resolution, I shall not fail to return to the army. I am afraid our sitting down before Gloucester has hindered us from making an end of the War this year, which nothing could keepe us from doing if we had a month's more time, which we lost there, for we never were in a more prosperous condition ; and yet the divisions do not at all diminish, especially betwixt 142 and 412, by which we receive prejudice. I never saw the King use anybody with more neglect than 100, and we say he is not used much better by the Queen. Mrs. Jermyn met my Lord Jermyn (who, notwithstanding your intelligence, is but a Baron), with whom I came, at Woodstocke with a coach, who told me she would write to you, which I hope she hath done : for since I came here, I have seen no creature but your father and my Uncle [Lord Southampton], so that I am altogether ignorant of the intrigues of this place. Before I go hence, I hope somebody will come from you, howsoever I shall have a letter here for you. I have taken the best care about my economical affaires. I am afraid I shall not be able to get you a better house, everybody thinking me mad for speaking about it. Pray bless Popet for me, and tell her I would have writ to

her but that, upon mature deliberation, I found it to be uncivill to returne an answer to a Lady in another character than her owne, which I am not yet learned enough to do. I cannot, by walking about my Chamber, call anything more to minde to set downe here, and really I have made you no small compliment in writing thus much ; for I have so great a cold, that I do nothing but sneeze, and mine eyes do nothing but water, all the while I am in this posture of hanging downe my head. I beseech you to present his service to my Lady, who is most passionately and perfectly Yours,

“SUNDERLAND.

“OXFORD, *September the 16th*, 1643.

“My humble service to Lady Lucy, and the other little Ladys.”

This was the last letter that he ever wrote. Four days more and that true and loyal heart had ceased to beat, and the wife who had been continually present to his mind was left widowed and desolate.

The news reached Oxford that a battle was imminent, and Sunderland hurried back to join the King just in time to take part in the fight at Newbury. That night the two armies lay in the fields under a bright starlit sky, “impatient,” writes an officer in the Parliamentary camp, “of sloth and darkness, wishing for the morning light to exercise their valour, incapable of sleep, their enemy being so nigh.” He goes on to describe the grave and solemn thoughts, the prayers that went up to the God of battles from the Puritan soldiers. But on the King’s side there were some whose thoughts were serious too, some Cavaliers who did not spend the night in drinking and dice-playing. Falkland’s heart, we know, was heavy with the weary longing for peace that was soon to be stilled for ever. Sunderland’s thoughts were turning to the green fields of his home, and the pleasant memory of his wife.

At break of day the King’s horse appeared marshalled in battle array on the brow of the hill, and after a few moments’ pause they dashed in magnificent confusion on the pikes of the London trained bands, men “till that day held in too



HENRY, FIRST EARL OF SUNDERLAND.

From the picture by Robert Walker.

cheap an estimation, but who now presented an invincible rampart to the Cavalier charge."

"Officers and commanders," says the same eye-witness, "did many of them leave off their doublets, and with daring resolution did bring on their men, as if they came rather to triumph than to fight." Three times over that splendid troop of horse, the flower of the Cavalier army, rode at headlong speed to the charge. Each time they were met by the same serried barrier of pikes, standing fast and immovable, "like a grove of pines in a day of wind and tempest." Three times the King's horse wheeled round and then charged again. And three times over they went reeling back among a cloud of bullets, which made fearful havoc both of men and horses.

Foremost in the brilliant company which "charged that day," says the historian of the Civil Wars, "with a kind of contempt and with wonderful boldness, upon their foes," rode Lord Sunderland, distinguished among so many brave men by his heroic bearing. Again and again he returned to the attack, with a valour which made even his enemies wonder, until, as he was in the act of gathering up his reins to charge once more, a bullet from a trooper's musket struck him, and he fell mortally wounded. Calmly and nobly he met his end, and those about him were surprised to see him die with so few regrets. He lived for some time after receiving the fatal wound, "and his holy thoughts," says Lloyd, "went as harbingers of his soul to heaven, whereof he had a glimpse before he died."

In the confusion which followed, his body fell into the hands of the enemy and was rifled by Parliamentary troopers, but Lord Leicester afterwards succeeded in recovering his son-in-law's corpse, and redeemed his watch from a soldier in the rebel army. His heart was taken to Althorp, and buried with his forefathers in the chapel of the Spencers at Brington.

Great was the consternation in the Royalist camp, when it became known how heavy a loss the King's cause had sustained in the death of Falkland, of Carnarvon, and of Sunderland, all three noblemen of known talents and virtues. And not even the illustrious philosopher who sleeps in an unknown grave under the limes of Great Tew, not Falkland

himself, was more deeply lamented than this young hero who died on the same fatal field at the age of twenty-three. For young as he was, he had lived long enough to be loved and honoured by a large circle of friends, and to be reckoned among those whose worth is not measured by the number of their years. Even Clarendon, in his grief for the friend who was dear to him as his own soul, pauses to record the loss sustained by the King's cause in the death of this young man. "Here," he says, "fell the Earl of Sunderland, a lord of great fortune, tender years—being not above three-and-twenty years of age—and an early judgment; who having no command in the army, attended upon the King's person, under the obligation of honour; and putting himself that day in the King's troop as a volunteer, was taken away by a cannon bullet."

Nor was it only his own party that lamented him. He had almost as many friends among the Parliamentarians as among the King's followers. The truest patriots on both sides honoured him as one of the few high-souled and disinterested men who had dared stand aloof both from the Court and Parliament parties. Northumberland and Algernon Sidney deplored his loss as bitterly as Southampton and Rupert, and a speaker in the House of Commons at Westminster, who paid a just tribute to his virtue and godliness, remarked that, "except in the occasion of his death, he had always been a good patriot."

But there were others on whom the blow fell still more heavily. The news was taken to Penshurst the next day, by one of Lord Leicester's own servants, who was charged to deliver his letters to Mr. Sudbury, who seems to have been Robin Sidney's tutor. He it was who had the hard task of breaking the sad tidings first of all to Lady Leicester and her daughter, whose delicate state of health made her an object of especial anxiety at the time. The way in which the unhappy wife and mother received the news is touchingly told in a letter discovered at Penshurst by a Mr. Dodd, who was rector there fifty years ago, and first published by Blencowe in his *Supplementary Papers to Henry Sidney's Diary*. Mr. Sudbury writes to Lord Leicester as follows—

“MY LORD,—The sad newes, which by your Lordship’s direction was first to be imparted to me, was by some indiscretion of him that gave me notice of the footman’s desire to speak with me, suspected by divers in the house before I could returne from him. I found my Lady Sunderland in soe great an apprehension that some ill accident had befallen some of her friends, that it was not possible for me to suppress it from her soe long as till I had delivered your Lordship’s letters to my Lady. Her Ladyship was soe full of expectation, that at my returne from the footman she would not suffer me to goe to my Lady till I would tell her what it was that made a footman from your Lordship come after soe unusual a manner as to send for me and not come himself with his letters. I told her Ladyship that I had letters, but that I had not opened them, but I heard the footman say my Lord of Falkland was slaine. This would not satisfy her Ladyship, in soe much that after some discourse of the miseries of these times, and how much it concerned all who had friends engaged in these wars to be ever armed against the worse newes they can apprehend, I was forced to let her know that my Lord Sunderland was also hurt. This put her into a great passion of griefe, and soon after into some fits of the mother. Her griefe, I perceived, was the greater because she feared I had not told her all, which she did not importune me to, and I had noe way to divert her from it but by entertaining her with such discourse as was more proper for a divine than for a relator of newes.

“All this while my Lady was in her own chamber, expecting my returne with the greatest passion that I ever saw in any body, and notwithstanding all I could say to her, through the extremity of her sorrow she fell into a swoone. But we soone recovered her out of that, and made her Ladyship understand how much she was concerned to put on all possible courage and resolution, and to goe and comfort my Lady Sunderland, whose griefe would be much increased to heare that her Ladyship was soe much afflicted, and she would receive noe consolations from any other that would have so much power to pacify her, as those which her Ladyship might afford her. This I urged and pressed upon her

as much as I could, till she had overcome her owne passion, and then I waited on her to my Lady Sunderland's chamber, where, falling on her neck she spoke such comfortable words to her, and in soe affectionate a manner as I am confident it was not possible for any divine or orator, with all their study and premeditation, to have been able in soe short a time to have charmed soe great a grieffe so well. After this, her Ladyship told her out of your Lordship's letter, how honourably and how piously her lord had left this world, having often charged the enemy before that fatal shott befell him, and then with how pious ejaculations he resigned his soule into the hands of God, with how great satisfaction of conscience he had entered upon this action, and how free from all self-respects. I shall not need to tell your Lordship that neither of their Ladyships took much rest that night. But this I can now affirme of them both, that it hath pleased God to give them patience, and I hope it will not be long before He sends them comfort likewise."

There is nothing to add to this simple and pathetic narrative. The whole scene is brought before us. We realize the dismay and terror of the household, the heart-rending anxiety of the poor young wife, longing to know all and yet fearing to ask, the bitter lamentations of the warm-hearted and impulsive mother, giving way utterly at first, but rousing herself to speak words of comfort and hope to her sorely-stricken child.

A week later Lord Leicester himself wrote the following beautiful and touching letter to his widowed daughter.

"MY DEARE DOLL,—I know it is to no purpose to advise you not to grieve, that is not my intention, for such a loss as yours cannot be received indifferently by a nature so tender and so sensible as yours; but though your affection to him whom you loved so dearly, and your reason of valuing his merit (neither of which you could do too much) did expose you to the danger of that sorrow which now oppressteth you; yet if you consult with that affection, and with that reason, I am persuaded you will see reason to moderate that

sorrow ; for your affection to that worthy person may tell you that even to it you cannot justify yourself, if you lament his being raised to a degree of happiness far beyond any that he did or could enjoy on earth, such as depends upon no uncertainties, nor can suffer any diminution, and wherein, though he knew your sufferings, he could not be grieved at your afflictions. And your reason will assure you that, besides the vanity of bemoaning that which hath no remedy, you offend him whom you loved if you hurt that person whom he loved. Remember how apprehensive he was of your dangers, and how sorry for anything that troubled you. Imagine that he sees how you afflict and hurt yourself ; you will then believe that he looks upon it without any perturbation, for that cannot be admitted by that blessed condition wherein he is, yet he may censure you and think you forgetful of the friendship that was between you, if you pursue not his desires in being careful of yourself, who was so dear unto him. But he sees you not ; he knows not what you do ; well, what then, would you do anything that would displease him if he knew it, because he is where he doth not know it ? I am sure that was never in your thoughts, for the rules of your actions were and must be virtue and affection to your husband ; not the consideration of his ignorance or knowledge of what you do. This is but an accident, nor do I think that his presence was at any time more than a circumstance not at all necessary to your abstaining from those things that might displease him.

“Assure yourself that all the sighes and tears that your heart and eyes can sacrifice unto your griefe are not such testimonies of your affection as the taking care of those whom he loved, that is, of yourself and of those pledges of your mutual friendship and affection which he hath left with you, and which, though you would abandon yourself, may justly challenge you the performance of their father’s trust reposed in you, to be careful of them.

“For their sake, therefore, assuage your griefe ; they all have need of you, and one especially, whose life as yet doth absolutely depend on yours. I know you lived happily, and so as nobody but yourself could measure the contentment of it.

I rejoiced at it, and did thank God for making me one of the means of procuring it for you. That now is past, and I will not flatter you so much as to say I think you can ever be so happy in this life again ; but this comfort you owe me, that I may see you bear this change and your misfortunes patiently. I shall be more pleased with that, than with the other ; but as much as I esteem virtue and wisdom in you more than any inconstant benefits that fortune could bestow upon you, it is likely that, as many others do, you will use examples to authorise the present passion which possesseth you, and you may say that our Saviour Himself did weep for the death of one He loved. That is true ; but we must not adventure too far after His example in that, no more than a child should run into a river because he saw a man wade through ; for neither His sorrow nor any other passion could make Him sin ; but it is not so with us. He was pleased to take our infirmities, but He hath not imparted to us His power to limit or restrain them, for, if we let our passions loose they will grow headstrong, and deprive us of the power which we must reserve to ourselves, that we may recover the government which our reason and religion ought to have above them.

“I doubt not but your eyes are full of tears, and not the emptyer for those they shed. God comfort you, and let us join in prayer to Him, that He will be pleased to give His grace to you, to your mother and myself, that all of us may resign and submit ourselves entirely and cheerfully to His pleasure. So nothing shall be able to make us unhappy in this life, nor to hinder us from being happy in that which is eternal. Which that you may enjoy at the end of your days, whose number I wish as great as that of any mortal creature, and that through them all you may find such comforts as are best and most necessary for you, it is and shall ever be the constant prayer of

“Your father that loves you dearly,

“LEICESTER.

“OXFORD, 10th October, 1643.”

The character of Lord Sunderland given by Lloyd in his *Memorials of Loyalists*, deserves to be recorded, and may as

well find a place here. It is written in the laudatory terms commonly used by this Royalist biographer, but all we know of Dorothy's husband agrees with the description which he gives.

“A true nobleman, that was virtuous because it became him, as well as because it was enjoined him ; being above all vice, as well as without it ; looking upon it as shame and dishonour, as well as sin and offence. A good neighbour. The country about him, when he had occasion to make use of it, being his friends that loved him, rather than slaves that feared him. A discreet landlord, finding ways to improve his land rather than rack his tenants. A noble housekeeper, to whom that ingenuity that he was master of himself was welcome in others. An honest patron, seldom furnishing a church with an incumbent till he had consulted the College he had been of, and the Bishop he lived under. An exemplary master of a family ; observing exactly the excellent rules he so strictly enjoined. Consecrating his house as a temple, where he ordered his followers to wrestle with God in prayer, while he wrestled with the enemy in fight.”

By a strange stroke of Fate, at the very time when Dorothy's husband met with this heroic end, her old lover, Waller, was condemned to death for plotting against the Parliament. In his abject terror, he tried to save himself by accusing a number of exalted persons, among them many ladies, of a share in his plot. Having thus bought his pardon, he fled to France, where he spent some years, and married a lady of the Bréaux family, by whom he had five sons and eight daughters. In 1654 he obtained leave to return home from his kinsman Cromwell, and wrote a fulsome Panegyric on the Lord Protector. At the Restoration he once more turned his muse to political account, and composed a poem on his Majesty's happy return, which he presented to Charles II., who remarked that it was inferior to his former Panegyric on Cromwell. Waller replied, with his usual effrontery, “Sir, we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as fiction.”

So thoroughly did he practise the principle he had once advocated in parliament, *first* to look to his safety, *then* to his honour.

CHAPTER XI

1643—1650

Birth of Harry Spencer—Lord Leicester dismissed from Office—The Royal Children at Penshurst—Princess Elizabeth's Jewel.

A FORTNIGHT after the news of the battle of Newbury reached Penshurst, and even before Lord Leicester's letter to his daughter had been written, Lady Sunderland gave birth to a son, who was named Henry after his gallant father. His baptism is recorded as follows in the registers at Penshurst, under the date of October the 4th, 1643 :—"Henry, son of Henry the Right Honourable Earl of Sunderland." The child became the pet and darling, not only of his widowed mother, but of the whole household at Penshurst, and was an especial favourite with Lord Leicester. But he died at the age of five and a half, to the grief of all his family. Dorothy herself rallied from the terrible shock, and when the first violence of the blow had passed she faced her desolate lot bravely. The sweet idyll of her married life was ended ; she had seen its beauty fade with the rose, and had learnt by sad experience the truth of her poet's words—

"How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair !"

But, as her father reminded her, she had her husband's children to live for, and she devoted herself nobly to the task. By the advice of her friends she addressed a request to the King, begging that her father might be associated with her in the guardianship of her infant son, in case of her own death. This petition was sent in the form of the following letter to

Lord Leicester, written within a few weeks after her husband's death—

“MY LORD,—The afflictions of my spirit and the weakness of my body will scarce suffer me to write ; but the consideration I have of my poor orphans makes me force myself to desire your Lordship that you will be pleased in my behalf to beseech his Majesty to join your Lordship with me in the wardship of my son ; for, except I receive your care and assistance in this business, I cannot hope to live or die with any satisfaction in what concerns my children's fortune. They are nearest to your Lordship if I should fail, and I cannot rely with confidence on any but yourself.

“What the King has graciously promised I cannot doubt, and therefore I make no request for that which I conceive is already given ; but I hear that some of my dear Lord's kindred have endeavoured to injure me, which I did as little expect as I do now apprehend anything which may contradict a declaration of his Majesty's justice to one who am by this loss the unhappiest of all creatures.

“The wardship will be of so little value for some years, as, were I not full of affection for my son, I should not wish the trouble which I believe this business will bring to us. I would have written to the King myself, but the distempers I am in have so dulled the little sense I had, as I dare not say anything to his Majesty. Wherefore I do again beseech your Lordship to present my request with that humility which becomes me, and if it be possible for me to take any comfort in this world, it will be in knowing that my son shall remain in your Lordship's care, if it should please God to take me from him.

“I have written with much pain, and yet I must add to it a protestation of being so long as I breathe, with all sincerity of heart, your Lordship's

“Most humble, obedient daughter,

“D. SUNDERLAND.”

The petition was no doubt granted ; and since there could be no question of returning to Althorp in the present distracted

state of the country, Lady Sunderland and her children remained under her father's roof, and made Penshurst their home for the next seven years. The apartments which they occupied close to the great Hall are now dismantled, but still bear the name of Sacharissa's rooms. From the window she could look out on the yew hedges and fruit trees of that beautiful garden and the avenues which had been sung by Waller. Here, at least, in this home where her early days had been spent, where she had been wooed and wedded, the young widow and her orphaned children found a safe shelter in these troubled times. But all around them the war was waging fiercely, and even Penshurst was not altogether free from its ravages.

In June 1643 there had been a rising in favour of the King at Tunbridge, which provoked retaliation on the part of the Parliament. Dr. Hammond, whose Royalist principles were well known, was ejected from his living. His rectory was plundered and his books were burnt by a party of soldiery, while he himself was forced to escape in disguise and take refuge at Oxford with the King.

This same year, 1643, the sequestration of Lord Leicester's estates was decreed by order of Parliament, in common with those of all the peers who adhered to the King's cause. By a hard fate, almost at the same moment, he was dismissed from the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Lord Ormonde received the appointment. No reason was assigned for this sudden change on the King's part, and, full of indignation at the affront, Leicester addressed the following spirited remonstrance to the Queen. Henrietta Maria, as it was generally known, had a considerable share in the matter, and the influence of her friends in the Council was becoming every day more powerful, to the great disgust of the moderate party.

“MADAME,—Suffer yourself, I beseech you, to receive from a person happy heretofore in your Majesty's good opinion this humble petition. That whereas the King hath conferred a great honour upon me, which now he hath taken from me, after a long and expensefull attendance for my dispatch . . . I cannot imagine what I have done to alter His Majesty's

just and gracious purpose toward me. But as I could never flatter myself with any conceit that I had deserved that honour, so I cannot accuse myself neither of having deserved to be dispossessed of it in a manner so extraordinary and so unusual in the King, to punish without showing the causes of his displeasure. In all humility, therefore, I beseech your Majesty to let me know my fault, which I am confident I shall acknowledge as soon as I may see it; for though it be too late to offer such satisfaction as, being graciously accepted, might have prevented the misfortune which is fallen upon me, yet I may present the testimonies of my sorrow for having given any just cause of offence to either of your Majesties.

“ I seek not to recover my office, Madame, but your good opinion, or to obtaine my pardone, if my fault be but of error; and that I may either have the happiness to satisfy your Majesties that I have not offended, and so justify my first innocence, or gain repentance, which I may call a second innocence. I must confess this is a very great importunity, but I presume your Majesty will forgive it, if you please to consider how much I am concerned in that which brings instant destruction to my fortune, present dishonour to myself, and the same for ever to my poore family; for I might have passed away unregarded and unremembered; but now, having been raised to an eminent place and dispossessed of it, otherwise than I think any of my predecessors hath been—the usual time not being expired, no offence objected, nor any recompence as signed—I shall be transmitted to the knowledge of following times, with a mark of distrust which I cannot but think an infamy, full of grieffe to myself, and of prejudice to my posterity. For these reasons I humbly beseech your Majesty to make my offence to appear, that I may undeceive myself, and see that it was but a false integrity which I have be-asked and presumed myself upon, that others may knowe that which they can but suspect, and that I may no longer shelter myself under the vain protection of a pretended affection to the King and your Majesty’s service, nor under the excuse of ignorance or infirmity. . . . But let me bear the whole burden of disloyalty and ingratitude, which admits of no protection or excuse, and I humbly promise

your Majesty, that if either of these crimes be proved against me, I never will be so impudent as to importune you for my pardon ; but if I be no otherwise guilty than as misinformation or misfortune many times make men in this world, then I beg leave to think still, that I have been a faithful subject and servant to the King ; and though I renounce all other worldly contentments whilst the miseries of these times endure, wherein the King, your Majesty and the whole Kingdom suffer so much, that it would be shame for any private man to be happy, and a sin to think himself so, yet there is one happiness that I may justify, therefore I aspire unto it, and humbly desire it of your Majesty, that you will be pleased to think of me as of your Majesty's most faithful and most obedient creature,

“LEICESTER.

“*December 1643.*”

This manly and eloquent appeal received no response, and Leicester remained at Oxford for some months longer, occasionally attending the Council meetings, but seldom offering his advice. “He desired not to have any part in the business,” says Clarendon, “and lay under many reproaches and jealousies which he deserved not, for he was a man of honour and fidelity to the King.” Finally he left Oxford early in 1644, and retired to Penshurst, where he was allowed to live unmolested by either party, and devoted his leisure to the studies which had always been his chief delight.

Soon after these events Lady Leicester addressed a petition to Parliament, in which she pleaded boldly for the restoration of her lord's estates, on the plea that he had never served against the Parliament. Her request was supported by her brother, Lord Northumberland, and by her own sons, Philip Lord Lisle and Algernon Sidney, both of whom were serving on the popular side, and their influence proved powerful enough to obtain the reversal of the order of sequestration. The Parliament was ready and eager to conciliate a nobleman who had always belonged to the moderate party, and two years later Lord Northumberland and Lord Holland, who had now gone over to the Parliament, endeavoured to induce

Leicester to quit his retirement and be once more admitted to the House of Lords. But this he steadfastly refused to do, and whatever wrongs he had received at Court, he still remained at heart the King's loyal subject and servant.

From his retreat at Penshurst he watched the course of public affairs with the deepest interest, and noted the chief events in a manuscript Journal which he kept during these years. His sons kept him well informed of all that happened in the councils of the Parliament. Both of them had already attained high distinction in spite of their youth. Algernon had, at an early age, adopted the republican principles which he professed with such inviolable fidelity to the end of his life, and served in many a hard-fought field bearing on his shield his favourite motto, *Sanctus amor patriæ dat animum*. He was dangerously wounded at Marston Moor, and narrowly escaped falling into the Royalists' hands. In 1647 he had the command of a regiment of horse in Cromwell's division, and as a reward for his valour, was appointed Governor of Chichester. A few months later he was returned to Parliament as member for Cardiff.

Early in 1646 Lord Lisle was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and in that capacity was sent to oppose the Royalists under his father's old rival, Lord Ormonde. Algernon accompanied his brother to Ireland as Governor of Dublin, and Lieutenant-General of the Horse. But at the end of a year both brothers were recalled, since the Parliament had resolved to divide the civil and military functions of the Lord Lieutenant, and Lord Lisle was superseded by Lord Inchiquin.

At the same time, Algernon Sidney was also removed from his post, but in recognition of his services he was made Governor of Dover Castle in October 1648. He lost this command two years later, in consequence of a quarrel with the officers of the garrison, but continued to take an active part in the despatch of public business in Parliament, and served on several Committees which had the management of home and foreign affairs. Meanwhile his elder brother had attached himself to Cromwell's person, and became one of the Protector's most ardent supporters.

Neither of the brothers, however, were present at Charles

I.'s trial at Westminster Hall, although both of them were members of the Commission appointed to try the King. Lord Leicester is careful to record this in his Journal.

"My two sons, Philip and Algernon, came unexpectedly to Penshurst, Monday, 22nd January, and stayed there till Monday, 29th January, so as neither of them was at the condemnation of the King, nor was Philip at any time at the High Court, though a Commissioner, but Algernon [a Commissioner also] was there sometimes, in the Painted Chamber, but never in Westminster Hall."

In a letter addressed to his father after the Restoration, Algernon Sidney reminds him that he took no part in the King's trial, and that he actually told Cromwell and Bradshaw that "the King could be tried by no Court."

All the details of Charles I.'s trial, of his execution and burial at Windsor, are given in Lord Leicester's Journal, and Lord Southampton (the uncle of Sunderland) is expressly mentioned among the faithful Lords who followed their martyred King to his grave in St. George's Chapel, that snowy winter's night. The writer makes few comments, but it is plain that his whole soul revolted with horror and indignation at the deed. He blames his cousin, Lord Pembroke, severely, for looking on from his window as the King was led out at Whitehall up the steps of the Banqueting Hall to die, and notes the fact of his kinsman's death, exactly a year later, as an evident mark of Divine Judgment for this criminal action. "That he should not have done, but have retired himself to pray for him, and to lament his misfortune, to whom he had so greate obligations." And he goes on to remark that Lord Salisbury, whose daughter, Lady Katherine Cecil, had lately married his son Philip, Lord Lisle, was also present, which was the more to be condemned since he and his father had received so many favours from the late King and his father.

Lord Leicester himself took the oath recognizing the authority of the Commonwealth with great reluctance, and only because unless he had subscribed this engagement, he could not have discharged his offices of guardian to his nephew, Lord Strangford, or executed the trust of his son-in-

law, Lord Sunderland, and raised portions on the Spencer estates for his younger children. But he made no secret of his aversion to Cromwell, whom he regarded as the main instrument of the King's death, and quarrelled repeatedly with his son Philip on this subject.

"And now the action begins again," he observes in his Journal of July 10th, 1649, after quoting a paragraph describing the Lord-General's departure for Ireland from the *Moderate Intelligencer*, "it is fit to observe how Cromwell and the rest will prosper, after the taking away of the late King's life, and other persons, Lords, etc. And abolishing kingly government, and House of Peeres, and erecting a Commonwealth."

And in a letter to his old companion at Paris, Watt Montagu, now Abbot of Pontoise, after speaking of the tyrannous acts passed by the new Government, he remarks bitterly, that it is not now as it was when there was no king in Israel, for instead of every man doing what was right in his own eyes, there is neither freedom of action nor of speech.

Among the family events which Lord Leicester chronicles, we find the marriage of his daughter Lucy to Sir Thomas Pelham's eldest son, which took place at Penshurst on the 20th of January, 1647, and the birth of her eldest child Dorothy in the following December. Then follows the death of his daughter, Mary Sidney, at Leicester House, in June 1648, and the birth of Lord Lisle's two sons, Algernon and Robert, only the younger of whom lived to grow up. And on the 14th of March, 1649, six weeks after the King's execution, we find an entry of the death of Lady Sunderland's youngest child, the boy whose birth took place under such sad circumstances, three weeks after his father's death.

"The sweet little boy, Harry Spencer, my grandchilde, five years old from October last, died at Leicester House."

The very day after the death of this much-loved child, Lady Carlisle, who was staying with her sorrowing sister and niece at Leicester House, was suddenly arrested by Colonel Harrison. This officer entered the house, read his warrant and made her prisoner, without allowing her, Lord Leicester remarks indignantly so much as to speak to his wife. She

was taken before the Council, examined, and committed a close prisoner to the Tower on the charge of complicity in Lord Holland's plot, an enterprise for which, according to Clarendon, she provided the money by pawning a pearl necklace worth £1500. She herself was released before long, thanks to the interest of her powerful friends, but Holland was executed, together with Arthur, Lord Capell, and the Duke of Hamilton, both of whom deserved a better fate. Lord Leicester records the death of this old rival who had changed sides so often, and from whose plots and intrigues he himself had so often suffered, and gives a sigh as he reflects how many of his old companions he has seen perish on the scaffold. "So the glory of the world passeth away," he moralizes, "and those that thinke themselves great, happy, and safe, are sett in slippery places, suddenly perish and come to a fearfull end" (Psalm lxxiii. 17, 18).

A few weeks after this event, which had filled the family at Leicester House with such consternation, the children of the late King, the Duke of Gloucester and Princess Elizabeth, were entrusted to Lord Leicester's charge by the Parliament. Their custody had in the first place been given to Lord Northumberland, but after the death of the King it was decreed that they should be removed to the country, in order, says Clarendon, "that they might not be the objects of respect, to draw the eyes and application of the people towards them." At the same time the sum allowed for their education and attendants was retrenched, and express orders were given that their titles should be dropped, and that they should eat the same food and sit at the same table with the children of the Sidney family. The allowance, however, still made them could not be called a mean one, neither was their retinue diminished, as we learn from an amusing note at Penshurst in Lord Leicester's handwriting: "In June 1649 the Parliament placed the Duke of Gloucester and Princess Elizabeth with my wife, allowing for them £3000 a year, which was a great accession of means to my wife, in proportion to the charge of these two children, and ten or eleven servants; and considering my expenses in fuel, washing, and household stuff, etc., also that I should have less liberty in my

own house than I had, and be obliged to attendance which would be troublesome to me, I thought it very reasonable to abate a great part of that £700 a year [his allowance to Lady Leicester for housekeeping], and so from Midsummer, 1649, I resolved to take off £400 a year. This caused a huge storm in the house, but I persisted in it."

But although Lady Leicester's housekeeping allowance was reduced, she succeeded in obtaining the loan of the royal furniture and plate for the use of her charges. Bedsteads of crimson and green velvet, fringed with gold and silver, Turkey carpets, velvet folding-stools, high chairs of yellow-wrought satin, with cushions and foot-stools to match, were sent down to Penshurst from Whitehall, while the plate included silver dishes and plates of all kinds, porringers and caudle-cups, candlesticks, snuffers, basins and ewers, and even a warming-pan.

The royal children, as might be expected, were treated with the greatest kindness by Lady Leicester and all the members of her family. Lady Sunderland especially won the heart of the Princess Elizabeth, who retained the most grateful recollections of her friendship and whose studious tastes and thoughtful disposition, as well as the sorrows which had clouded her early years, naturally endeared her to the young widow. An excellent tutor of the name of Lovel, whom Dorothy had engaged to direct her little son's education, now took charge of the Duke of Gloucester, and proved a faithful friend and teacher to him and his sister. They arrived at Penshurst on the 14th of June, and remained there more than a year, during which time the poor young Princess's health and spirits improved visibly. A charming portrait of her, in a white brocade gown, with a spaniel at her side, is still to be seen at Penshurst. The sweet innocent face is full of charm, and the features bear a marked resemblance to those of her father and of her sister Henrietta, the brilliant and beloved Madame of Louis XIV.'s Court. But the happy days which she spent at Penshurst were soon cruelly ended. A report got abroad that the royal children were treated with too much respect for their rank, and, according to a Royalist newspaper of the day, the Speaker, Lenthall, was sent by the Parliament to Penshurst, to inquire

whether the Countess obeyed the orders which had been given her. He is said to have found the Princess and her brother sitting at dinner at a table apart from the rest of the family, and when he remonstrated with Lady Leicester, received the spirited answer that, as long as she lived, she would never allow any member of her household to sit at table with the King's children. But what really led to their withdrawal from Lady Leicester's sheltering care was the landing of their brother, Charles II., in Scotland in the summer of 1650, and the fears then entertained that this might be followed by a rising in England on their behalf. On the motion of Sir Henry Mildmay, an order was issued by the Council for the removal of the man Charles Stuart's children to the Isle of Wight, and with many tears the Duke and his sister bade their kind friends farewell. On her departure, the Princess left in Lord Leicester's hands a pearl necklace, which in case of her death she desired might be given to her brother the young Duke, and a diamond necklace which she begged Lady Leicester to accept as a token of her gratitude for the affectionate kindness that had been shown her at Penshurst. On Friday the 9th of August, the Duke and Princess were taken to Carisbrooke Castle and placed in the custody of the Governor, Mr. Anthony Mildmay, with strict orders that in future they should be treated as the children of a private gentleman, and styled Mr. Harry and Lady Elizabeth.

It was a sad change for them, but the Princess at least did not live to regret it long. Her fragile health gave way under the strain of troubles and sorrows she had known in the last few years, and she died on Sunday, the 8th of September, just a month after she had left Penshurst. As she lay dying, she spoke gratefully of the kindness which had been shown her there, and charged Mr. Lovel to convey her last remembrances to Lord and Lady Leicester. At the same time she repeated the wish she had already expressed that the Countess would keep her diamond necklace as a last token of her grateful affection, and that "sundry other little things," which had belonged to her, "might be given to my Lady of Sunderland."

The necklace, which was valued at £600, became a source of lively contention between Lady Leicester, who claimed its

possession by right of the Princess Elizabeth's bequest, and the Parliament, who required Leicester to give it up. In support of Lady Leicester's claim, the following document was registered in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, signed, it will be noticed, by Lady Sunderland and her father—

“Be it remembered that the Lady Elizabeth, deceased, daughter of the late King, having, while she lived, deposited with the Earl of Leicester a jewel of diamonds, did, in the month of August in the year of our Lord God 1650, being then in her perfect mind and memory, with a serious purpose to dispose of the said jewel by her last will nuncupative, declare her mind and meaning herein as followeth: To wit: The jewel of diamonds which I formerly delivered to the Earl of Leicester, I give and bequeath unto the Countess of Leicester, his wife, and my mind and will is, that when I die, she shall receive and enjoy the same; or the said Lady Elizabeth did declare her will and mind touching the said jewel, in words to the effect and purpose aforementioned, in the presence of credible witnesses—

“LEICESTER,

“D. SUNDERLAND.”

The Earl also drew up a long statement on the subject, which he presented to Parliament, ending with the following words: “And I hope the Parliament will not deny a young and innocent lady the liberty which every subject hath, to dispose of her goods, nor to my wife and me the honour of that testimony of the said Lady Elizabeth's satisfaction with our care of her in the time that, as the Parliament's servants, she was received and entertained by us at our house.”

The claim was laid before Cromwell and a commission appointed to inquire into the merits of the case. But the quarrel lasted for many years, and in 1659 the jewel was wrested from its lawful owner, and placed in the Exchequer. On her death-bed, a few months before, Lady Leicester had bequeathed it as her most precious possession to her “dear boy,” as she calls her son, Henry Sidney, and after the Restoration Lord Leicester renewed his claim, and eventually received, if not the jewel itself, a sum of money equal to its value.

CHAPTER XII

1650—1652

Marriage of Lady Strangford—Lady Sunderland at Althorp—Death of Elizabeth and Frances Sidney.

A FORTNIGHT after the Princess Elizabeth and her brother were removed by order of the Council from Penshurst, Lord Leicester's youngest daughter, Isabella, married her first cousin, Lord Strangford. Her father thus notices the event in his Journal—

“*Thursday, the 22nd August.*—My daughter, Isabella Sidney, was married to my Nephew Strangford, by Mr. Antrobus [vicar of the adjoining parish of Leigh and chaplain to the household], in the Chappell at Penshurst; to which marriage I was pressed by my said Nephew's desire and persuasion of my wife, and some other friends; and not by any inclination of mine own; for I like not marriages of so neare persons.”

There were other causes besides this close relationship which might well account for Lord Leicester's objection to his daughter's marriage, and the result proved that his fears for her future were but too well founded.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Lord Leicester's youngest sister, Lady Barbara Sidney, had in 1622 married Sir Thomas Smythe, grandson of the Great Customer, and one of the richest owners in Kent. In 1628 he was raised to the peerage as Viscount Strangford, and lived in great splendour at his fine house of Westenhanger, formerly a royal palace, which had been presented by Queen Elizabeth to her faithful servant, Customer Smythe. But he died very

suddenly in 1635, leaving a babe of a year old to inherit his lands and honours. Two years after her husband's death, Lady Strangford scandalized her relations by marrying Sir Thomas Colepepper, an officer whom she had only known ten days, and whose reputation was not such as to make her choice agreeable to her friends. On the 1st of February, 1637, Lady Leicester wrote to inform her husband, who was then in Paris, of his sister's second marriage, and a few days later she sent him the following characteristic account of a visit which she had received from Sir Thomas Colepepper. "This night your new brother-in-law came to visit me, which is a very extraordinary civility, for I never saw the man's face in my life, and have not heard a word from your sister since the marriage, which makes me wonder the more at his cavalier compliment. What she finds in him I do not know, but if he be not a very ass, I am deceived."

After this, we are hardly surprised to hear that Lady Strangford had no further communication with her family, although she was anxious that her brother should undertake the guardianship of her son, conjointly with Sir Thomas Colepepper, a charge which Lord Leicester declined. Accordingly, after Lady Strangford's death and that of her second husband in 1642, the boy was brought up by Sir Thomas Fotherley, to whom the wardship of the young Viscount had been entrusted by his mother's will and the King's consent. Lady Leicester, however, who always had a keen eye to her husband's advantage, was anxious that he should claim his nephew as his ward, and wrote to him at Oxford to this effect.

"The estate is about £4000 a-year, the rents, I believe, as well paid as any in England, and it appears to me very unreasonable that Sir Thomas Fotherlie, who is thought none of the honestest, should have to dispose of such a fortune. Crispe [a London merchant who was executor to Sir Thomas Colepepper] says that your sister would have had him out of Fotherlie's hands, had she lived a little longer, and that they have letters to show from the King which gives her that liberty, and I cannot imagine how his Majesty should refuse to you the governance of this ward, for by the law of the land

it belongs to you, and if there be any favour to be shown in the remove of this ward, I hope it will not be thought too much of you, who have spent so many years in the King's service. Assuredly this convenience would be very great to you, and I am extremely desirous to gain this advantage for you, and I do not know how you can hope for the like opportunity of obtaining such a benefit."

Lord Leicester, however, was too much engaged in public affairs to press the matter, and seems to have been satisfied that Sir Thomas Fotherley and his wife had done a good part by his nephew, who from a delicate infant had grown into a strong and healthy youth, and was said to be as well-educated and bred as most young noblemen of his age.

In July 1646 he invited him and his guardian to Penshurst, and wrote to Sir Thomas Fotherley: "My sister Strangford hath often recommended to me the care of her son, not only if I should outlive her, but even in her lifetime. This, together with the affection which I bear to her son, my nephew Strangford, whose nearest kinsman I am, makes me very desirous to see him, and that he may spend some time with me, which I will endeavour to make him pass as pleasantly and as profitably as I can, and I will be as careful of him as of my own children. Therefore, if you and my Lady Fotherley please to accompany him hither, you shall all be very welcome both to my wife and myself."

The visit apparently proved so pleasant to the young lord, that when Sir Thomas died, two years afterwards, he himself wrote to his uncle, begging him to receive him into his family, and undertake his wardship.

"I am now fifteen years of age, and am told that it is in my own power to choose my own guardian. I have no friend to counsel me, or direct me herein, but am wholly led by my own inclination humbly to desire your lordship to take that trouble upon yourself. All my kindest friends may approve of my choice as a due expression of my obedience to the desires of my deceased mother. If they will not, I can give them many reasons why I ought to honour your lordship and make choyce of you for my guardian, before any other person."

Lord Leicester agreed to this proposal. He took his

orphan nephew into his family, and devoted much time and pains to the care of his estates. But before the boy had been a year in his uncle's house, he fell desperately in love with Lady Isabella, the youngest but one of Lord Leicester's large family of daughters. She was exactly his own age, extremely pretty and charming, and played the lute with great skill and taste, although, as it appeared in the future, she had little stability of character or good feeling. Early in 1649 the hot-headed young lover wrote to his uncle, who was then at Leicester House, begging him to favour his suit.

“MY LORD,—The person and merit of your daughter, my Lady Isabelle, have brought me to have but one ambition, which is the being received by her, as I very really am, her most passionate and devoted servant, who for this most perfect happiness cast myself upon your Lordship's favour most earnestly, and humbly beseeching you to grant me your consent ; and to give your assistance both by your owne persuasions to my Lady Isabelle, and also in obtaining my Lady's approbation to this the greatest of all concernments to me. Having this encouragement, I shall adventure to write her all the expressions of my affection and respect that I am capable of doeing, though I apprehend they cannot doe me right in showing how much I honour her. But in this I have been hitherto more reserved than was for my ease, not knowing what boundes I must keepe till I have your Lordship's permission. If I shall be bleste with soc fortunate success as to be raysed from the title of nephew to that of sonne, I shall endeavour by all the wayes that are or ever can be in my power, to bring myself as nere deserving that excellent lady as my little merit will permit, which is my best recommendation to your Lordship's and my Lady's favour, to which I will adde a perpetual gratitude.”

Lady Leicester, who was no doubt keenly alive to the worldly advantages of the match, and whose impressionable nature would be easily moved by the sight of the young man's passion for her daughter, favoured his suit warmly from the first. Both Lady Sunderland and Algernon seem to

have looked kindly on their sister's love-affair, and to have put more trust in young Strangford's protestations than he deserved. He certainly was the most plausible of young men, and in his impatience to gratify his passion he was ready to do and promise everything that was required of him.

Moved by his urgent entreaties, supported as they were by the elder members of his family, Lord Leicester gave a reluctant consent to his request, but even then the foolish youth was not satisfied with the way in which his advances to his cousin were received, for he wrote again—

“I hope your Lordship will excuse the importunity of an impatient lover. I find myself much disappointed in all good and personal addresses to my Lady Isabelle, nor know I what to impute my misfortune to more than this, that I believe she knows not how I have formally begged and obtained your Lordship's licence. Neither can I expect from her, if she were acquainted therewith, anything but coyness and bashfulness, until your Lordship by speaking to her shall vouchsafe to prefer me to some further acquaintance than I dare yet pretend to.”

Lady Isabella, however, soon turned a willing ear to this ardent lover, and although the extreme youth of both parties might well have justified a longer period of delay than the twelvemonth on which her father insisted, at the end of that time Lord Leicester yielded to his wife's persuasion, and the marriage took place. An express stipulation was made in the marriage contract, that the young couple should reside at Penshurst until Lord Strangford came of age. During that time, a certain allowance out of his fortune was to be paid to Lord Leicester, and he further agreed to settle a certain sum on his wife as soon as he attained his majority. A month after this ill-omened wedding, Lady Sunderland left Penshurst with her children, to go and live at her son's house at Althorp. Lord Leicester mentions her departure in his diary.

“*Tuesday, the 24th September, 1650.*—My daughter Sunderland went from Penshurst to London; from thence to dwell by herself at Althorpe.”

Now that peace was restored, and the country was once

more tranquil, there was nothing to delay her return to her husband's house, where she naturally wished her son to grow up in the home of his ancestors, among those scenes which his father had loved so well. For the next ten or twelve years, Althorp remained Dorothy's home, and she devoted herself to the education of her children and the management of her son's estates. This son, Robert, was a boy of extraordinary promise, and his quickness and aptitude for learning astonished all his tutors. His mother, anxious above all to give him a training such as his father would have wished, secured the services of Dr. Thomas Pierce, a Fellow of Lord Sunderland's old college of Magdalen, who had been ejected from Oxford by the Parliamentary Commissioners. This learned and pious divine became the young Earl's tutor, and some years afterwards, when his pupil went to Oxford, was appointed by Lady Sunderland to the Rectory of Brington. He afterwards became President of Magdalen, and preached a memorable sermon before the King on the 29th of May, 1661, being the anniversary of the Restoration. He was also the author of several devotional works, one of which, published in 1660, bore the singular title, "The Sinner impleaded in his own Court: Wherein are represented the great Discouragement from Sinning, which the Sinner receiveth from Sin itself: Whereunto is added the grand Character of a Christian." This book was dedicated by the Author to the Right honoured and most noble Dorothy, Countess of Sunderland, in the following epistle—

"It is by your Ladyship's donation that I enjoy a good portion, and, which is more, a good people whose more than usual integrity and more than ordinary affection, as I am apt to believe when I look abroad, have made me much more happy in my contentment than all their possessions put together can make me rich. And as they were a treasure which, under the Providence of God, was by your Ladyship's care as well as favour committed to my charge, so I am able with some comfort to give your Ladyship this account, that how few soever I may have gained, I have not lost so much as one. Were it not for this comfort, I should think my

present possession, though most freely conferred by your Ladyship, had been bought by me at too dear a rate, it having cost me a sequestration from your Ladyship's presence, and from the immediate pleasure which I enjoyed in the education of your son, whose choice rudiments of nature, having been properly seasoned and crowned with grace, gave him such a willingness and aptitude to be taught, as reconciled my greatest pains with ease and pleasure. So that the education of my dear Lord was not so much an employment as it was my recreation and reward."

Lady Sunderland's residence in Northamptonshire was especially memorable for the great kindness which she showed to the distressed clergy in the neighbourhood, many of whom found shelter in her hospitable house, when they were ejected from their livings. Mindful of Dr. Hammond's teaching, and full of gratitude for his goodness in the old days at Penshurst, she helped them in a thousand ways, and made herself generally beloved by her thoughtful and charitable acts.

"She is not to be mentioned," says Dr. Lloyd, in his *Memorials of Loyalists*, "without the highest honour in this catalogue of sufferers, to many of whom her house was a sanctuary, her interest a protection, her estate a maintenance, and the livings in her gift a preferment."

At the same time she improved and beautified the house at Althorp, and planned the great double staircase which is still its chief feature, and which excited the admiration of the Grand Duke Cosmo of Tuscany, who paid a visit to her son in 1669, and mentioned it in his Journal as one of the most striking objects in the different country houses which he had seen in England.

Dorothy's visits to Penshurst were still frequent, and her presence was the more valued by her parents, in the domestic troubles and losses which clouded their declining years. Three of their daughters died of consumption at an early age. Mary, the fourth, had died in 1648, at the age of nineteen, and Elizabeth, the fifth, breathed her last after a lingering illness, only a week after Dorothy left Penshurst to go and live at Althorp. She was a great favourite

with her father, who records her death in these touching words—

“*Thursday, the 3rd October, 1650.*—My daughter Elizabeth Sidney died at Penshurst in the 18th year of her age, and on Monday following was buried in the church there, by Mr. Antrobus, the Vicar of Leigh. She had been sick divers months of a consumption and pain in her stomach, which she bore to the last with admirable patience and cheerfulness, and had such a divine assurance of her future happiness, that she left the world with more joy than if she had gone to be married to the greatest Prince on the earth. And not above half an hour before her death, she tooke her leave of me, smiling, and when I told her, ‘Petty, I have prayed for you, I desyre you to pray for me,’ she, holding me by the hand, said, ‘I do pray for you heartily, and God be with you.’ Which were the last words that I heard her say. She had to the last the most angelicall countenance and beauty, and the most heavenly disposition, and temper of minde, that I thinke hath been seene in so younge a creature, being not eighteen years old.”

Exactly a year afterwards, her sister Frances, who was only two years older, followed her to the grave, after the same weary months of sickness, borne with the same sweetness and patience. Once more Lord Leicester enters the mournful event in his Journal.

“*Thursday, 9th October, 1651.*—About 4 o’clock in the morning, at Penshurst, my daughter, Frances Sydney, died after a long and painfull sickness, wherein God gave her many and great comforts, for which I prayse His Name. She had sate up with help in her bed, and, as she lay down again, she fainted and sayd, ‘I have no more breath, now I am gone. Lord receive me.’ This Mr. Antrobus told me, who had assisted her the most part of her sickness, yet he was not present at her death, which, when he left her about midnight, he thought would not have been so soone, but the manner of it, as he sayd, was told him by the women that were with her. She was about twenty years of age, a very good, modest, discreet and sweet-natured creature, and I doubt not she is now with her Saviour and ours in Paradyse. She was buried

privately, on Monday, the 12th of October, at night, by Mr. Antrobus, the Vicar of Leigh, in whose parish the chamber is where she dyed, yet with the permission of Mr. Mauditt the present Rector of Penshurst, *pro tempore*; and she is layed, as she desyred, betweene or very near her two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, who, I hope, are all together in Heaven."

A few months later, Lord Leicester records the death of his daughter-in-law, Lady Lisle, who gave birth to a daughter at Northumberland House, and died of a sudden attack of fever six days afterwards. This youthful lady whose bright and pleasant face smiles down on us among the Sidney portraits at Penshurst, had married at seventeen, and was barely twenty-four years of age at the time of her premature death. She was buried in the chancel at Penshurst, and her young daughter, Dorothy, together with Robin Sidney, her only son, were brought there, and remained for some years in their grandmother's charge. This melancholy event did not improve the character of Lord Lisle, whose haughty and ungovernable temper and bitter political dissensions with his father and brother Algernon had estranged him from all his family. During the rest of his father's lifetime he seldom visited Penshurst, and never wrote to Lord Leicester except to complain of some, whether real or imaginary, grievance. He represented Kent in the popular assembly summoned by Cromwell in 1654, "to bear some shew of the ancient Parliaments," as Lord Leicester remarks in his Journal, and, three years later, became one of the seventy members of the new House of Lords nominated by the Protector himself. After the death of Cromwell, and the events which led to the Restoration, Lord Lisle retired to his house at Sheen, where he spent most of his days, enjoying the pleasures of country life, and cultivating those literary tastes which he shared in common with all the Sidneys. Among his neighbours at Sheen was his old friend, Sir William Temple, who kept up a lively correspondence with Lord Lisle, when he was sent as minister to Holland. Sometimes they discoursed of books sometimes of gardens. One of Temple's letters describes the different methods of cultivating cherries and vines which he

had seen abroad ; in another he alludes jokingly to Lord Lisle's taste for solitude, and to the secluded life he led with his daughter at Sheen.

“ I wish I could send you a little Spanish mistress from hence, whose eyes might spoil your walks, and burn up all the green meadows at Sheen, and find other ways of destroying that repose which your Lordship pretends alone to enjoy, in spite of the common fate of mankind.”

CHAPTER XIII

1652

Lady Sunderland's Second Marriage—The Smythes of Boundes—Dorothy Osborne—Relics of Sacharissa.

FOR almost nine years Lady Sunderland had now been a widow. Her beauty and charm were as great as ever, and the sorrows of her early life had invested her with a still deeper interest. This fair young Countess, who bore herself so well and modestly in all the relations of life, who had proved so admirable a wife and mother, who managed her son's estates with so much wisdom, and whose hands were busy with works of active kindness and benevolence to all her neighbours, was a very attractive and captivating figure. The music of the poet's song, and the memory of her young husband's tragic fate, had surrounded her with a halo of romance. There were many who, like Sir William Temple and Dorothy Osborne, looked upon her as a being of rare and surpassing goodness, worthy of universal homage. And this reverent admiration owed not a little of its sentiment to the constancy which Lady Sunderland had vowed to her husband's memory. She loved him with a love which could never change, and the look in her eyes told others that for her the best as well as the worst this life has to give was over. At thirty she had as many lovers as she had at twenty, and strange to say, she was as cold to them as she had been in the days of her youth.

More than one gallant gentleman, both in Kent and Northamptonshire, sighed in vain for Lady Sunderland, as Waller had sighed for Sacharissa. More than one could

boast of her kindness, like that gay widower and courtly gentleman, Sir Justinian Isham, who lived at his fine place, Lamport, close to Althorp, and was honoured with Lady Sunderland's friendship, but never allowed to hope for anything more. The world had accepted the fact, and Dorothy's family and friends had come to the conclusion that her grief as well as her love was doomed to be eternal. Suddenly, one summer day, to the surprise of all her friends and of the world in general, she married again.

The fortunate gentleman whom she chose for her second husband was Sir Robert Smythe, of Sutton-at-Hone and Boundes in Kent. He belonged to the great Kentish family of the Smythes, and, like the young Lord Strangford, who two years before had married her sister, was a great-grandson of the famous old Customer of Queen Elizabeth's time. But while Lord Strangford represented the elder branch of the family, and owned the Customer's moated house at Westenhanger, Sir Robert belonged to the younger branch. His grandfather, Sir Thomas, was the third and by far the most illustrious of Customer Smythe's sons. He inherited his father's talents and energy, and, following in his steps, rose to high eminence as a ship-owner and merchant. In 1599 he was made Sheriff of London, and while in office was sent to the Tower on suspicion of favouring Lord Essex's intrigues, but was soon released and knighted by James I. on his accession. Afterwards, he took an active part in the management of the Virginian Company, and himself visited the colony on one occasion. In 1606 he was elected Governor of the East India Company, and in 1614 was sent as Ambassador to Russia. He was also for many years a naval Commissioner, and the inscription on his monument, in the Church of Sutton, describes him as "a prime undertaker for the noble design of the North West Passage." Most of his life, however, was spent at his father's house at Skinner's Place, Deptford, which is said to have been "the stateliest mansion ever seen in those parts." Here he directed the affairs of the East India Company, and superintended the outfit of their vessels, until advancing age and failing health compelled him to give up the post of Governor. Then he

retired to the palatial mansion which he had built on his estates at Sutton-on-Hone, near Dartford, where he died in 1625, of the plague which was at that time raging in Kent. He was buried in Sutton Church, where a noble alabaster effigy, bearing a marked likeness to that of his father, the Great Customer, in Ashford Church, adorns his tomb. During his lifetime, Sir Thomas was known as a generous and large-hearted man, and at his death he founded an exhibition at Tunbridge School, and left benefactions to the poor of the parishes in and round Bidborough, the next village to Penshurst. Here he had purchased the estate of Great Boundses, famous in olden times as the resort of Sir Thomas More, Erasmus, and many other distinguished guests. The fine Tudor manor-house, still standing in the park, was chiefly the work of Queen Elizabeth's favourite, Lord Hunsdon, but was afterwards enlarged and altered by the Smythes. Sir Thomas himself seldom lived there, but by his will he left bequests of doles of money, cloth, and coals to a number of deserving families, and desired that a certain number of loaves of bread should be given every Sunday, in church, to so many poor and honest residents.

A year after Sir Thomas's death, his widow, Sarah Blount, as already mentioned, married her neighbour, Robert Lord Leicester, the grandfather of Lady Sunderland, who only lived a few weeks after this second marriage. This connection with the Sidneys, strengthened as it was by the marriage of the same Earl's daughter to the first Lord Strangford, was drawn closer by the marriage of Sarah Lady Leicester's only son, Sir John Smythe, with Lady Isabella Rich, a daughter of Lord Warwick. Not only was this lady a cousin of the Percies, but her mother, Lady Leicester's aunt, was Lady Penelope Devereux, the Stella whom Sir Philip Sidney loved and lost, and whose charms he celebrated in undying numbers. Lady Isabella, who inherited her mother's wavy golden hair and dark eyes, often visited her cousin, Lady Leicester, at Penshurst, and probably there became acquainted with Sir John Smythe of Boundses. Sir John himself was supposed to be an authority on the art of military defences, and his book, *On the Conduct of Warres*, went through two editions. It

was their only child, Robert Smythe, who now became Lady Sunderland's second husband. Born about the year 1620, he was a year or two younger than Dorothy Sidney, and had probably known her from a child. He had been at Oxford with John Evelyn, who speaks of him as an old friend and contemporary. Dorothy Osborne describes him as "a very fine gentleman," who more than deserved even this peerless lady. His rank and fortune were sufficient to entitle him to aspire to her hand, and that he was a very handsome, martial-looking knight, with his mother's and grandmother's fine dark eyes, we know from the portrait which hangs in the gallery at Althorp. Of his character and history we learn no particulars. But we know that for years he had loved Dorothy, and that this devotion of his was so openly acknowledged, as to be the jest of the fair ladies who watched his hopeless passion with much amusement and not a little pity. This constancy it was, which in the end vanquished Lady Sunderland's resolve never to wed again, and to the extreme surprise of the world won both her heart and hand.

It was at Penshurst, where thirteen years before, in the same month of July, she had been wedded to the young Lord Spencer, that her second marriage was now solemnized. Lord Leicester, as usual, records the event in his Journal—

"Thursday, the 8th of July.—My daughter Spencer was married to Sir Robert Smith at Penshurst, my wife being present with my daughters Strangford and Lucy Pelham, Algernon and Robin Sydney, etc. But I was at London."

The absence of Dorothy's father from her wedding gives the impression that he could not have altogether approved of her second marriage, and it is very probable that the vexation which Lord Strangford's headstrong conduct had already caused him, may have rendered him averse to this fresh union between one of his children and another member of the Smythe family. But the intimate relations which existed between Dorothy and her old home remained unbroken to the end, and to his dying day nothing ever came to mar the tender affection of Lord Leicester for his deare Doll. Her father, it may be noticed, speaks of the bridegroom as Sir Robert Smith, the title commonly given him in later

records, although he does not seem to have been knighted until after his wedding, and the entry in the marriage register at Penshurst is as follows: "1652—8th of July. Robert Smythe, Esq^e., to the R^t Hon^{ble} Dorothy, Countess of Sunderland."

The day after the wedding, a fresh visitor came to Penshurst, who has left us in his Diary a record of the gay scene which he found in these ancestral halls. This was none other than Mr. Evelyn, who, being at the Wells near Tunbridge for the good of his wife's health, went over on the 9th of July, 1652, to Penshurst, and "found a great company assembled to celebrate the marriage of my Lady Sunderland with my old fellow-collegian, Robert Smythe."

Another lady, who was drinking the waters that autumn, at Tunbridge, has left us some very amusing impressions of the effect produced by Lady Sunderland's marriage. This was Sir William Temple's affianced bride, Dorothy Osborne, the writer of those charming Letters to her lover which have lately been given to the world. Both at this time and afterwards, she had repeated opportunities of meeting Lady Sunderland and her husband, and had become acquainted with the Sidney ladies. The knowledge of Temple's intimacy with the whole family naturally made her look with interest at her lover's friends, and this was especially the case with Lady Sunderland, who had been the object of Sir William's youthful dreams, and whom Dorothy herself had long looked upon as a paragon of perfection! This second marriage, it is plain, came as a shock to both the lovers, and although Dorothy owns she has not a word to say against Mr. Smith, as she calls him, she cannot conceal her conviction that by taking to herself a second husband, this exalted lady has made a false step, or at least lowered herself, by a good many degrees, in the world's eyes.

And so on hearing of the marriage, she writes to Sir William in her usual lively and delightful fashion. "Who would ever have dreamt Mr. Smith should have had my Lady Sunderland; though he be a very fine gentleman, and does more than deserve her! I think I shall never forgive her one thing she said of him, which was that she married him out

of pity. It was the pitifullest saying that ever I heard, and made *him* so contemptible that I should not have married him for that reason.”¹

Temple, it appears, agreed cordially with her in his rejoinder, and expressed his sincere regret that Lady Sunderland should stoop from her high place to take this unfortunate step, for she continues in her next—

“But I am altogether of your mind, that my Lady Sunderland is not to be followed in her marrying fashion, and that Mr. Smith never appeared less her servant than in desiring it. To speak truth, it was convenient for neither of them, and in meaner people had been plain undoing one another, which I cannot understand to be kindness of either side. She has lost by it much of the repute she had gained by keeping herself a widow. It was then believed that wit and discretion were to be reconciled in her person that have so seldom been persuaded to meet in anybody else. But we are all mortal.”²

A few weeks later she retails for his benefit all the gossip which reaches her ear about the newly-wedded couple.

“At present we do abound with stories of my Lady Sunderland and Mr. Smith; with what reserve he approaches her, and how like a gracious princess she receives him, that they say 'tis worth going twenty miles to see it! All our ladies are mightily pleased with the example, but I do not find that the men intend to follow it, and I'll undertake Sir Solomon Justinian [Dorothy's merry nickname for Sir Justinian Isham, of Lamport, who had courted both herself and Lady Sunderland in vain] wishes her in the Indias, for fear she should pervert his new wife!”³

But poor Sir Solomon, as she calls him, had, she confesses further on, as yet not found a bride, and was still wife-hunting.

Again she writes—

“I have sent into Italy for seals, 'tis an humour which your old acquaintance Mr. Smith and his lady have brought up; they say she wears twenty strung upon a ribbon, like the nuts boys play withal.”

¹ *Letters of Dorothy Osborne*, p. 51.

² *Ib.* p. 54.

³ *Ib.* p. 61.

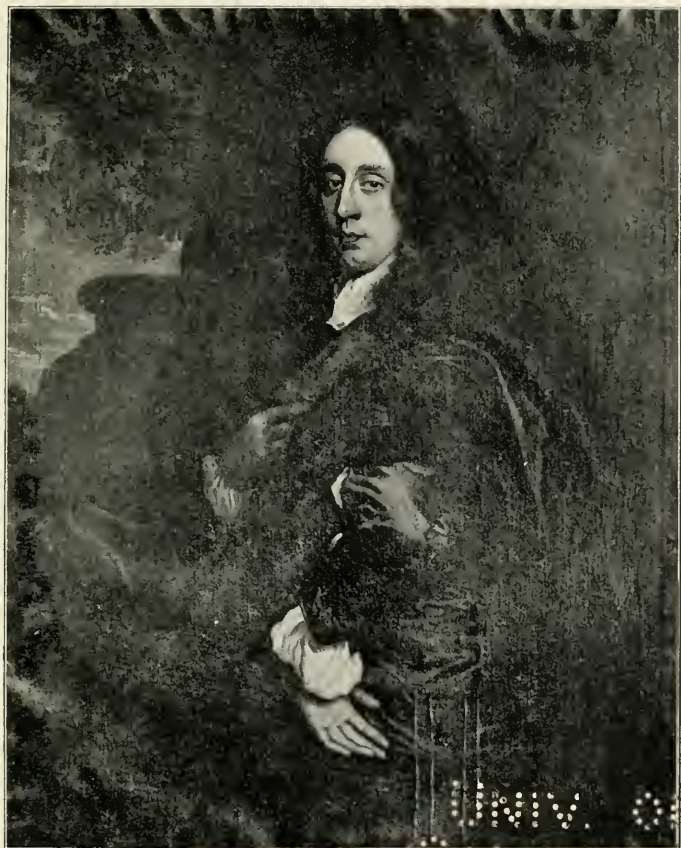
And in alluding to a present which has been made to an attendant of hers, she remarks that she supposes it was as great a testimony of his kindness as 'twas of Mr. Smith's to my Lady Sunderland, when during his courtship he "presented her maid, Mrs. Camilla."

Her interest in the happy pair had not died out in the following year, when Temple met Lady Sunderland and her new lord in Northamptonshire. Now that he had seen them with his own eyes, he was satisfied that the marriage had been less of a mistake than he had been inclined to suppose. They are happy, of that he is satisfied, and Dorothy Osborne hastens to agree with him, although she cannot resist a little gentle raillery at her lover's expense.

"Were you at Althorp when you saw my Lady Sunderland and Mr. Smith, or are they in town? I have heard indeed that they are very happy; but with all that, as she is a very extraordinary person herself, so she aimed at doing extraordinary things, and when she had married Mr. Smith (because some people were so bold as to think she did it because she loved him) she undertook to convince the world that what she had done was in mere pity to his sufferings, and that she could not go a step lower to meet anybody than that led her, though when she thought there were no eyes on her, she was more gracious to him. But perhaps this might not be true, or it may be she is now grown weary of that constraint she put upon herself. I should have been sadder than you if I had been their neighbour to see them so kind; as I must have been if I had married the Emperor [Sir Justinian Isham]. He used to brag to me always of a great acquaintance he had there, and what an esteem my lady had for him, and had the vanity (not to call it impudence) to talk sometimes as if he would have had me believe he might have had her, and would not; I'll swear I blushed for him when I saw he did not!"¹

These sprightly remarks from Dorothy Osborne's pen are the more valuable since we have no other information about Lady Sunderland's union with Sir Robert Smythe. This part of her life is absolutely barren in records, and the most

¹ *Letters of Dorothy Osborne*, p. 135.



ROBERT SMYTHE.

From the picture by John Riley.

diligent research has hitherto failed to discover anything more about her second marriage. We cannot tell how long her husband lived or where he died. There is no record of his burial either at Bidborough, the parish church of Boundes, or else at Sutton-at-Hone, where the other members of his family were buried. All we know is, that in the first year of their marriage a son was born to them, who received his father's name, and who is occasionally mentioned in Lady Sunderland's letters as "my sonne Smith." This young Robert Smythe spent his childhood at Althorp, and in after days was often there with his half-brother, Lord Sunderland. Before he was twenty, he married a Northamptonshire lady, Catherine, daughter of Sir William Stafford of Blatherwyck, and went to live on the family estates at Sutton-at-Hone. His father was evidently no longer living, and in all probability died a few years after his marriage to Lady Sunderland.

These years were no doubt chiefly spent at Althorp, where Dorothy continued to manage her son's estates, until he came of age in 1662. They never lived at Sutton, which was by far the most splendid of Sir Robert's houses, but both before and after his marriage her husband always seems to have preferred Boundes. And it is certain that Boundes was at one time Dorothy's home, probably after the young Lord Sunderland attained his majority and married. Traces of her presence lingered there for long afterwards. Portraits of herself, and of all the Sidney family, adorned the walls; old books and letters which had been carefully treasured up from the days of her youth, were preserved by her descendants. From the wooded glades where the old manor-house stands, on the high ridge between Tunbridge and Penshurst, Dorothy could look down on her old home in the valley below, and her eye could range over some of the loveliest scenery in England. Here, in the shade of noble forest trees, she could enjoy the solitary walks which she had loved in her young days, and breathe the pure air of the Kentish hills. The scenes around her had been familiar to her from childhood, and were for ever associated with the brightest and the saddest moments of her life. And changed and darkened by the

lapse of years, as that home at Penshurst was, there were still those living there who claimed her care and had a strong hold on her affections. We cannot tell how long she lived at Boundes, or which years of her life were spent in this beautiful retreat, but we may be sure the place was dear to her, and that whatever sorrows she had to bear, the days she lived in the old manor-house were not all unhappy ones.

Her son, Robert Smythe, became Constable of Dover Castle in the reign of Charles II., and died while still a young man in 1695. He never lived at Boundes, which was probably let, and on one occasion, we know, was occupied by Dorothy's brother, Lord Leicester ; who, in 1680, entertained a large party there, Robert Smythe and his wife and child being among his guests. His eldest son, another Robert, died in 1674, when still an infant, and was buried at Sutton. The second, named Henry, was only fifteen years of age when he succeeded to the estates of Sutton-at-Hone and Boundes on his father's death. His life also proved a very short one, for he died in 1706 at the age of twenty-nine. During his minority, his mother and guardian, Catherine Stafford, sold Sutton-at-Hone, but Boundes remained in the possession of his son, Sir Sidney Stafford Smythe, who became Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and Privy Councillor, and lived to a great age. Unfortunately he had no children, and on his death in 1778 this branch of the Smythe family became extinct. Boundes passed into other hands, but his widow, Sarah Farnaby, lived there, until her own death, twelve years later.

Here Mrs. Boscawen, the friend and correspondent of Hannah More, came to visit Lady Smythe, after drinking the waters at Tunbridge Wells, in the summer of 1780.

In a letter to Hannah More, who was then staying at Oxford with her revered friend Dr. Kennicott, Mrs. Boscawen thus describes the visit which she paid to the widow of Dorothy's great-grandson.

"I have been in Kent, in a house, Boundes, which once had for its mistress the beautiful Sacharissa. Her fair form, if I opened my door, was the first to salute my eyes ; then, if I turned, the gallant Sir Philip Sidney next presented

himself. Immense oaks, enormous beeches which had shaded them, shaded me. I remember when I was with Lady Gower, she took me a walk one day to a very pleasant part of the forest, to see a tall oak under which Pope used to sit. She had written very legibly on a board, 'Here Pope sang,' and fixed it to the tree, higher than any one can reach to deface it. Thus you poets dignify all you touch! I spent my time very agreeably with my worthy friend, Lady Smythe, widow to Sir Sidney Smythe, late Lord Chief Baron, and great-grandson to Sacharissa, Countess of Sunderland. That lady's Bible which I observed in the library consisted of six volumes in thin quarto, printed by Field. The Pentateuch was the first. The historical books made the second. Ezra and Nehemiah, with the Psalms, etc., made the third. The fourth contained the Prophets; the fifth, the Gospels and Acts; the sixth, the Epistles and Revelations. Each had its peculiar title-page, telling its contents over and above the general one. I do not remember to have seen such a Bible, and I tell you of it as one who has gleaned many an ear of corn from Dr. Kennicott's sheaves."

The books and pictures of the Smythes have been dispersed. Dorothy's Bible has disappeared, the relics of the "beauteous dame," which her descendants prized so highly, have long ago perished. But the picturesque old manor-house of Elizabethan times is still standing, and in the park of Boundes there are trees ancient enough to have shaded Sacharissa in her walks. We are glad to feel that her name and her presence are associated with so lovely a spot, and with such peaceful surroundings.

CHAPTER XIV

1653—1661

Algernon Sidney—*Julius Cæsar*—Lord and Lady Strangford—An Exile's Letters.

OF all Dorothy's brothers, the ablest and the best was without doubt Algernon Sidney. As a child he had been remarkable for his precocious wit, and as he grew up, the promise of the boy had been fulfilled in the man. But throughout his career he was singularly unfortunate, and this, it must be owned, was in a measure his own fault. The nobleness of his character, the high principles which governed his actions, were beyond dispute, and statesmen such as Temple and Halifax had the highest opinion of his talents. But there was a haughtiness in his bearing, a harshness and severity in his language, which repelled even those who shared his opinions. His colleagues in Parliament complained of his overbearing temper, and he had a positive talent for making bitter speeches, which estranged the sincerest of his friends. Conscious as he was of the purity of his own motives, he could not restrain his impatience when he was thwarted by men of inferior rectitude, and the bursts of irritation to which he gives way in his letters, go far to explain the loneliness and sadness of his position in later life. As he says himself, "I have been these many years outstripped by those that were below me, whilst I stopped at those things that they easily leaped over. What shall I say? It hath been my fortune from my youth, and it will be soe to my grave, but which my designes in the world will perpetually miscarry." Yet there was a tender side to his

nature, which takes us by surprise when it happens to show itself. His affection for his mother, who lavished so large a share of her affection on her youngest son Henry, is revealed in the touching letter which he wrote at her death. And if he erred in those dealings with Lord and Lady Strangford which brought him such infinite vexation, it was on the side of indulgence, caused, as he says himself, by that "affection to his sister which was so hard to root out of his heart." And he was sincerely attached, at least in his early days, to his sister Dorothy, whose assistance and counsel he sought on more than one occasion, when he found himself in difficulties. Lady Sunderland, on her part, was always fond of this brother, whose cultured tastes and contemplative nature agreed so well with hers, and she kept a packet of his letters among her most precious possessions to her dying day. These letters, which had been written by Algernon to his father, while he was employed by the Parliament on a diplomatic mission to Copenhagen and Stockholm, and during his subsequent wanderings on the Continent, were found carefully preserved among Dorothy's papers at Boundes, and were given by Sir Sidney Smythe's widow to some friends at Sevenoaks, who handed them to Mr. Blencowe, the editor of the *Sidney Papers*.

After Cromwell's assumption of supreme power, Algernon Sidney retired from public life, and as a consistent Republican refused even to be a candidate at the election of the Parliament summoned by the Protector four years later. Lord Leicester, in his Journal, gives a graphic description of the famous scene in the House of Commons when Cromwell ejected the Rump, as reported by his son Algernon, who was present in his seat on that occasion.

"*Wednesday, 20th April, 1653.*—The Parliament, sitting as usuall, the Lord Generall Cromwell came into the House, clad in plain black hose, with gray worsted stockings, and sate down as he used to do in an ordinary place. After a while he rose up, putt off his hat, and spake; at the first and for a good while, he spake to the commendation of the Parliament, for their paines and care of the publick good; but afterwards he changed his style, told them of their injustice,

delays of justice, self-interest and other faults ; then he sayd : ‘Perhaps you thinke this is not Parliamentary language ; I confess it is not, neither are you to expect any such from me’ ; then he putt on his hat, went out of his place, and walked up and down the stage or floore in the midst of the House, with his hatt on his head, and chid them soundly, looking sometimes, and pointing particularly upon some persons, as Sir R. Whitlock, one of the Commissioners for the Greate Seale, Sir Henry Vane, to whom he gave very sharp language, though he named them not, but by his gestures it was well known that he meant them. After this, he sayd to Colonell Harrison (who was a member of the House), ‘Call them in’ ; then Harrison went out, and presently brought in Lieutenant Collonell Wortley (who commanded the Generall’s own regimint of foote), with five or six files of musqueteers, about 20 or 30, with their musquets. Then the Generall, pointing to the Speaker in his chayre, sayd to Harrison, ‘Fetch him downe.’ Harrison went to the Speaker, and spoke to him to come downe, but the Speaker sate still, and sayd nothing. ‘Take him downe,’ sayd the Generall ; then Harrison went and pulled the Speaker by the gowne, and he came downe. It happened that day, that Algernon Sydney sate next to the Speaker on the right hand ; the Generall sayd to Harrison, ‘Put him out’ ; Harrison spake to Sydney to go out, but he sayd he would not go out, and sate still. The Generall sayd again, ‘Put him out’ ; then Harrison and Wortley putt theyre hands upon Sydney’s shoulders, as if they would force him to go out ; then he rose and went towards the doore. Then the Generall went to the table where the mace lay, which used to be carryed before the Speaker, and sayd, ‘Take away these baubles’ ; so the soldiers tooke away the mace, and all the House went out ; and at the going out, they say, the Generall sayd to young Sir Henry Vane, calling him by his name, that he might have prevented this extraordinary course, but he was a Juggler, and had not so much as common honesty. All being gone out, the door of the House was locked, and the key with the mace was carried away, as I heard by Collonell Otley.”

From that time, Algernon Sidney retired to Penshurst, where he spent the next five years with the exception of a short visit which he paid to the Hague, and devoted his leisure to literary pursuits. He wrote treatises and discourses both in Latin and Italian, amongst others the *Essay on Love*, in which he set forth his ideal of a virtuous passion and perfect union of hearts, and, it has been thought by some of his biographers, took his sister Dorothy as his model of a noble and cultivated woman. But his disappointment at the failure of his political dreams was bitter, and he openly avowed his republican principles, and made no secret of his enmity to the Lord Protector. On one occasion, in the summer of 1656, by way of amusing the household at Penshurst, he gave a representation of Shakspeare's play of *Julius Cæsar* in the great hall of the Castle. A large audience of friends and neighbours assembled to witness the performance. The actors did their part well, and were loudly and enthusiastically applauded. But the hero of the evening was Algernon himself, who appeared in the character of Brutus, and levelled his speeches directly at Cromwell. His admirable rendering of a part so exactly to his taste, and the applause which he received from the audience, reached London, and became the talk of the town. This made Lord Lisle furious, and he forthwith wrote an indignant remonstrance to his father, complaining of the insult offered to the Lord Protector, and of the unfair degree of authority which his brother Algernon assumed at Penshurst. At the same time, he defends himself from the charge of accepting personal favours from Cromwell.

"MY LORD,—Your Lordship's letter of the 12th of this month I received not till yesterday, the 16th, which was the reason I did not sooner take notice of it. In my poore opinion, the business of your Lordship's house hath passed somewhat unluckily, and that it had been better used to doe a seasonable courtesy to my Lord Protector, than to have had such a play acted in it, of public affront to him; which doth much entertain the towne. I have been in some places where they have told me they were exceedingly pleased with the gallant

reception of the chief actor in it, and by applauding him, they put him severall times upon it. I did yesterday acquaint his Highnesse that your Lordship had given an order that your house [Leicester House] should serve his occasions, and that I was sorry his Highnesse had forbade it, before these directions came. He told me he did give your Lordship thanks for your intention to accomodate him. When I shall say that my meaning was, that the fruite of this obligation should be reaped in your Lordship's and my Lady's concernments, I shall not have advanced much; but upon this occasion I shall say this also—That the only thing whatever that my Lord Protector ever gave me, which was the office of Custos Rotulorum in Kent, a good while after Sir Harry Vane's death,—when I had given him thankes, I made it my request that your Lordship should have it; when he said, he could not tell whether it might be, but that he would consider of it, and with some other discourses, that matter fell. I do rather wish this may be no further mentioned, because I am not sure my Lord Protector would be willing it should be spoken of. I have no more to say towards this matter, but that I again aske your Lordship's pardon if I tooke more upon me than did belong to me; but I assure your Lordship I undertook nothing. And then, my Lord, I have my constant sorrow, to see your Lordship never omits an opportunity of reproach to me; and in earnest, I thinke, laying all other matters asyde, this which hath appeared most emminently upon this occasion is very extraordinary; that the younger sonne should so domineer in the house, that not only in regard to this matter which I have spoken of, but at all times, I am uncertayne whether I can have the liberty to looke at it or no, for it seemes, it is not only his chamber but the great roomes of the house, and perhaps the whole, that he commands; and upon this occasion I think I may most properly saye it, that his extreamest vanity and want of judgment are so well knowne, that there will be some wonder at it; for my owne part I submit all to your Lordship, and am

“Your very obedient son,

“P. LISLE.

“June 17, 1656.”

But there were worse troubles than these political squabbles of the two elder brothers, in the family at Penshurst. The result of the Strangford marriage had justified Lord Leicester's worst fears. In the very first years of his marriage, the young Viscount plunged into a course of reckless folly and extravagance. He made friends with the most dissolute young men, squandered his money, adopted their vicious habits, and refused to pay the smallest heed to his father-in-law's remonstrances. His wife appears to have been as foolish and headstrong as himself. Her charms and engaging manners could not blind the eyes of so acute an observer as Dorothy Osborne to her real character. This is how Lord and Lady Strangford are described in one of her letters to Temple.

"My Lady Isabella, that speaks and looks and sings and plays all so prettily, why cannot I say that she is as free from faults as her sister believes her? No, I am afraid she is not. My brother did not bring them for our example, but I did, and made him confess she had better have married a beggar than that beast with all his estates."¹

The sister was no doubt Lady Sunderland, who shared her brother Algernon's affection for their young sister, and did all in her power to save the young couple from disgrace and misery. But Lord Strangford preferred to take the advice of the dissolute companions with whom he was surrounded, and fell an easy prey to their tricks. His behaviour led to constant quarrels with his father-in-law, and early in 1653, when he was not yet nineteen, he and his wife suddenly left Penshurst and took a lodging in Covent Garden.

At the same time he wrote an angry letter to Lord Leicester, demanding certain sums of money as his right. His father-in-law replied in a simple and dignified letter, saying that he had never had £100 of Strangford's money in his custody, and reminding the young man that he had himself chosen him for his guardian, and must therefore continue to regard him as such until he was of full age. He adds in conclusion: "If you consent to this, you and I may live still

¹ *Letters of Dorothy Osborne*, p. 246.

as friends ; if not, you will take your course and I will take myne, soe I rest,

“ Your loveing friend and father-in-law,

“ LEYCESTER.

“ PENSURST, 30 *September*, 1653.”

But the wilful and headstrong young man still persisted in his demands, and through his counsel, a lawyer named Newman, boldly asked Lord Leicester to give his daughter a portion, declaring, if this were denied him, he on his part would refuse to fulfil the marriage contract, by which he had promised to settle a jointure on his wife, as soon as he came of age. Leicester met these preposterous claims in a prompt and decided manner, and wrote a letter to Mr. Newman, beginning with the words : “ Since my Lord Strangford will have an answer, he shall have one, and it is this.” After showing that his son-in-law really owed him a considerable sum of money, he points out that he had given his daughter to him very much against his will, and that no mention had ever been made of a portion at the time of the marriage.

“ I say,” he writes, “ that it is not at all strange to see a man marry a wife for affection and other considerations, without a portion. In ancient times it was alwayes, or very often done, and sometimes now alsoe. But it is very strange that a man should demand a fortune three or four yeares after the marriage made and consummated, never having spoken of it before. Truly I thought I had sufficiently obliged my Lord Strangford by consenting for his contentment, and upon his earnest solicitations, to that marriage, to which I never forced him, nor so much as persuaded him or my daughter, and to which I never had any the least inclination, but much adersion, as it is well known ; and if my Lord Strangford before marriage had desyred a portion, as he now demands, I doubt not I could have married my daughter to a better fortune, and much more to my contentment, and perhaps to hers ; and here seemeth a fine trick, that my Lord Strangford doth pretend to be mightily in love, and extremely to desyre allyance with me, without never speaking of a portion till after he be married, and so sure of

his wife, and then demand a portion of the Earl of Leicester, and bring knightes of the post to sweere that he promised a portion ; for no honest man in the world will either sweere or saye that ever I promised any portion, or that Lord Strangford did ever speak with or send a message to me, concerning a portion, till he went unhandsomely away from me."

After that the correspondence ceased, and Lord Strangford abandoned himself to the most reckless course of dissipation.

Algernon Sidney now interfered, and, moved with pity for his unfortunate sister, did his utmost to reclaim his brother-in-law from ruin. He came to London repeatedly to see them, interceded with his father on their behalf, and at length induced Lord Strangford to write a humble letter to Lord Leicester, entreating his forgiveness, and solemnly promising to reform his ways. On coming of age, he agreed to fulfil his marriage contract, and make a settlement on his wife, which should amply satisfy her friends, and prove "his own kindness to her."

But these resolutions, as Lord Leicester foretold, were not kept long. The young couple returned to Penshurst for a time, but soon fresh quarrels broke out. Forgetting all the help and kindness Algernon had shown her, Lady Strangford treated him with the utmost ingratitude, and did all she could to blacken him in his parents' eyes. Before long they went back to London and resumed their old ways. Strangford returned to his profligate habits and to his old companions, "cheating knaves, half-witted and," as his father-in-law described them, "half-mad"; and it was not until he found himself in actual want that he turned to his generous brother-in-law. The picture which Algernon Sidney draws of him in a letter to his father was not likely to appease Lord Leicester's natural indignation at his son-in-law's conduct. He describes Lord Strangford as "perpetually drunk, and complaining that the tavern companions who encouraged him in his dissipation did cheat him so as not to leave him half-a-crown in his purse." This time Algernon might perhaps have left him to his fate, had it not been for the tender affection he still bore his sister, in spite of the ingratitude with which

she had rewarded his former goodness. But when Lady Strangford threw herself on her knees at his feet, acknowledging her faults with many expressions of repentance and affection, and imploring him to help her, he was unable to resist her prayers and tears, and once more did his best for her. He gave her lodging and shelter in his own rooms, and again undertook the management of Strangford's affairs, and advanced money, which he himself could ill afford, to tide them over their most pressing difficulties. Lady Sunderland also, moved by compassion for her unhappy sister, and further influenced by the relationship of the Strangfords to her husband, now lent her brother Algernon the sum of a thousand pounds, to be employed for their use.

After the death of Cromwell, the Parliament which had been ejected by him met again, and Algernon Sidney returned to his old place at Westminster. He joined heartily in the first resolution that was passed securing the liberties of the people, without the government of either King, Protector, or any single individual. On the 8th of June, 1659, he and Sir Robert Honywood were sent as Commissioners to Copenhagen, to open negotiations for peace between the Kings of Denmark and Sweden. On leaving England, he gave Lady Strangford all the means he had at his disposal, in short, as he afterwards told his father, he risked his life, his fortune, and reputation alike for her benefit. But it was only to find himself once more bitterly deceived. Lady Strangford, who seems by this time to have had no sense of honour and gratitude left, broke all her promises, directly her brother's back was turned, and did him all the mischief in her power. Even Algernon's patience was now at an end, and he wrote to his father: "Since, after having robbed me, they railed at me, and in all respects dealt soe unworthily with me, I shall be innocent after this of what prejudice may befall them."

On hearing of the Restoration of Charles II., Sidney's first impulse was to return home at once, although he owned that he felt uncertain how he should be received there. His diplomatic task had been successfully accomplished, and his old friend Monk made him liberal offers of promotion. But when he heard the turn affairs had taken, and the treatment

which Vane and his other old colleagues had received, he soon saw that this would be impossible. And in answer to the friends who urged him to come home, he replied in the following characteristic letter—

“SIR,—I am sorry I cannot in all things conform myself to the advice of my friends. If theirs had any joint concernment with mine, I should willingly submit my interest to theirs ; but when I alone am interested, and they only advise me to come over as soon as the act of indemnity is passed, because they think it is best for me, I cannot wholly lay aside my own judgment and choice. I confess, we are naturally inclined to delight in our own country, and I have a particular love to mine. I hope I have given some testimony of it. I think that being exiled from it is a great evil, and would redeem myself from it with the loss of a great deal of my blood. But when that country of mine, which used to be esteemed a paradise, is now like to be made a stage of injury ; the liberty which we hoped to establish oppressed ; luxury and lewdness set up in its height, instead of the piety, virtue, sobriety, and modesty which we hoped God by our hands would have introduced ; the best of our nation made a prey to the worst ; the parliament, court, and army corrupted ; the people enslaved, all things vendible ; no man safe, but by such evil and infamous means as flattery and bribery ; what joy can I have in my own country in this condition ? Is it a pleasure to see that all I love in the world is sold and destroyed ? Shall I renounce all my old principles, learn the vile court arts, and make my peace by bribing some of them ? Shall their corruption and vice be my safety ? Ah no, better is a life among strangers than my own country upon such conditions. Whilst I live, I will endeavour to preserve my liberty ; or at least not consent to the destroying of it. I hope I shall die in the same principles in which I have lived, and will live no longer than they can preserve me. I have in my life been guilty of many follies, but, as I think, of no *meanness*. I will not blot and defile that which is past, by endeavouring to provide for the future. Let them please themselves with making the King glorious, who think a

whole people may justly be sacrificed for the interest and pleasure of one man, and a few of his followers. Let them rejoice in their subtilty, who by betraying the former powers have gained the favour of this, not only preserved, but advanced themselves in these dangerous changes. In all preceding ages, parliaments have been the palace of our liberty, the sure defenders of the oppressed. They, who formerly could bridle kings, and keep the balance equal between them and the people, are now become instruments of all our oppressions and a sword in his hand to destroy us, they themselves led by a few interested persons, who are willing to buy offices for themselves, by the misery of the whole nation, and the blood of the most worthy and eminent persons in it. Detestable bribes, worse than the oaths now in fashion in this mercenary crowd. I mean to owe neither my life nor liberty to any such means. When the innocence of my actions will not protect me, I will stay away till the storm be over-passed. In short, where Vane, Lambert, Havelrig cannot live in safety, I cannot live at all. If I had been in England, I should have expected a lodging with them; or though they may be the first, as being more eminent than I, I must expect to follow their example in suffering, as I have been their companion in acting.

“I am most in a maze at the mistaken informations that were sent to me by my friends, full of expectations of favours and employments. Who can think that they who imprison them would employ me, or suffer me to live when they are put to death? If I might live and be employed, can it be expected that I should serve a government that seeks such detestable ways of establishing itself? Ah! no; I have not learnt to make my own peace by perverting and betraying my brethren, more innocent and more worthy than myself. I must live by just means, and serve to just ends, or not at all. After such a manifestation of the ways of which it is intended the King shall govern, I should have renounced any favour, into which the kindness and industry of my friends might have advanced me, when I found those that were better than I were only fit to be destroyed. I had formerly some jealousies; the fraudulent proclamation for indemnity in

creased them. The imprisoning of those three men, and turning out of all the officers of the army, contrary to promise, confirmed me in my resolutions not to return. To conclude, the tide is not to be diverted, nor the oppressed delivered; but God in His time will have mercy upon His people. He will save and defend them, and avenge the blood of those who shall now perish upon the heads of those who, in their pride, think nothing is able to oppose them. Happy are those whom God shall make instruments of His justice in so blessed a work! If I can live to see that day, I shall be ripe for the grave, and be able to say with joy, 'Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace.' Farewell. My thoughts as to King and State depending upon their actions, no man shall be a more faithful servant to him than I, if he make the good and prosperity of his people his glory, none more his enemy if he doth the contrary. To my particular friends I shall be constant on all occasions, and to you a most affectionate servant."

A man who dared hold language of this kind was not likely to be welcome at Charles II.'s Court, and it is not surprising to learn that Sidney's name was excepted from the general amnesty. Even his request for permission to visit his father at Penshurst met with absolute refusal, and Lord Leicester, who had been very intent to find a way of bringing him to England, acknowledged that he saw no hope of his return at present.

Accordingly Algernon resolved to visit Italy, and after spending some time in Germany, he reached Venice in the autumn of 1660. On the 12th of October he wrote to his father, giving an account of his travels and future plans.

"I have had a very cold, wet, and troublesome journey through the mountains of Bavaria and Tyrol, and in some places dangerous by the overflowings of the torrents. After one fortnight those ways will be hardly passable, until the snowes are all fallen, and the frost followe upon them. I have been here a week, and to-morrow I intend to begin my journey towards Rome. It will perhaps seem a little ridiculous for me to saye I have business in Rome, but it is true. When

I sawe there was noe man would advise me to comme into England before the act of oblivion passed, fewe after it, and that I myself was extreame averse to it, and found great inconvenience in staying at Hamburgh, I did engage myself to goe thither, and could not recede but with extreame prejudice. I doe also incline rather to stay there, or at Florence, than in any other place out of England: but if your Lordship doth dislike either, I will upon your command remove from thence into Germany or France, or in the springe into England; though I know not where or how to live there, though I should be free from trouble from the Court, which I do not expect."

And then he goes on to speak of his private affairs, and of the wrongs which his sister had done him.

"I hear that Lady Strangford doeth now soe well explain herself as to shewe I shall be free from no trouble shee can give me, unlesse I will soe farre yield to my present distresse as to purchase quiet by renouncing my pretences to any satisfaction for all my charges and expences for their business, which I will not do; I will not trouble your lordship with the particulars. Sir John Temple knowes them."

He did not, however, meet with much sympathy on this subject from Lord Leicester, who had never forgiven him for intervening in his quarrel with his son-in-law, and had good cause to know how utterly unscrupulous both Lord and Lady Strangford were.

"I have little to saye," he wrote, "to your complaints of your sister Strangford's unequall returns to your affection and kindness, but that I am sorry for it, and that you are well enough served for bestowing soe much of your care where it was not due, and neglecting them to whom it was due; and I hope you will be wiser thereafter." Owing to these quarrels, Algernon had, it appears, set out on his journey without taking leave of his father, and in the same letter Lord Leicester complains bitterly of his neglectful conduct. "After you had left me sick, solitary, and sad at Penshurst, you neither came to give me a farewell, nor did so much as send one to me, but only wrott a wrangling letter or

two concerning money, and Hoskins and Sir John Honeywood's horse."

Yet the son's heart yearned after his father, and he wrote affectionately to him. "I doe not know whither the course of my fortune doth leade me, probably never to returne to see your lordship, or my own countrey againe; however, if I have offended your lordship, transported by folly, or the violence of my nature (I have nothing else that needs your forgiveness), I beseech you to pardon it; and let me have your favour and blessing alway with me. If I live to returne, I well endeavour to deserve it by my services, if not, I can make no returne but by my prayers for you, which shall never be omitted."

Sir John Temple, who was sincerely attached to all the Sidneys, and had an especial regard for Algernon, now exerted himself to redress his wrongs, and tried hard to induce Lady Strangford to make amends. But his friendly services proved of little avail. Algernon was especially anxious to recover the thousand pounds which were owing to his sister, Lady Sunderland; but in the end Lady Strangford seems to have evaded Sir John Temple's demands, and the debt was left unpaid. Even the legacy bequeathed to Algernon Sidney by his mother, had been swallowed up. No wonder these wrongs rankled in the proud man's mind, as, an exile for conscience's sake, he wandered through the pleasant South, "forsaken of my friends, poore, and knowne only to be a broken limb of a shipwrecked faction."

"I did intend to have sayed more," he wrote in the bitterness of his heart, "but it is a folly to conceale the evils that oppresse me. I have with difficulty writ this, and the troubled thoughts into which the letters received by the last post have cast me, give me not easily the liberty of saying more. The misfortunes into which I was fallen, by the destruction of our party, did not shake me. The cheats and thefts of servants were too ordinary to trouble me. I suffered my mother's legacy to be drawne from me, upon which I might have subsisted for a good while. I was not very much surprised to find myself betrayed and robbed of all that with which I had trusted Lady Strangford, but I confess that

I am sorely troubled to find that Sir John Temple is going into Ireland, the agreement which he had soe often said should be made with Strangford broken, from which I might expect somme part of what is due unto me, to live upon. And by all these means together, I find myself destitute of all help at home, and exposed to all these troubles, inconveniences and mischiefs, into which they are exposed, whoe have nothing to subsist upon, in a place farre from home, wheare no assistance can possibly be expected, and wheare I am knowne to be of a quality which makes all lowe and meane waye of living shamefull and detestable. These are part of the evils with which I find myself encompassed, and out of which I see no issue, nor can I make one step that is not as likely to prove my destruction as preservation. It will not, I think, be thought strange, that I am sensible of them, since he that is not must be an Angell or a Beast. My only hope is, that God will somme way or other put an end to my troubles or my life."

He wrote to Sir John Temple in the same sad strain, and the kind old man's heart was so moved by the "high discontents expressed therein," and his keen sense of his friend's neglect, that he wrote to Lord Leicester, urging him to take pity on his son's forlorn condition, and saying that if he would be pleased to express his fatherly care of him, and at the same time send him such a supply as would prove his affection, it would be a work worthy of his lordship. Leicester seems to have recognized the justice of his remarks, and complied with his suggestion, for in his next letter Algernon thanks him for the supplies sent him, and writes in more cheerful spirits, saying he has found health and quiet solitude at Frascati. "Whilst everybody at Rome," he writes on the 13th of June, "is panting and gasping for life in the heat, which they say this year is much greater than ordinary, I enjoy so fresh an air, as to have no reason at all to complain of the sun. Here are walks and fountains in the greatest perfection, and though my natural delight in solitude is very much increased this last year, I cannot desire to be more alone than I am, and hope to continue. My conversation is with birds, trees, books, and whatever hath been formerly

the objects of my thoughts and desires ; I have now intention of seeking very little more than quietness and retirement."

In his next letter he says he is as ignorant of what is happening in England as of the affairs in China, and is living as a hermit in a palace, thankful to have escaped from the making and receiving of visits which made life in Rome a burden to him. He has once more taken up his favourite studies, and has with "somme eagerness fallen to reading, in which pursuit he finds soe much satisfaction that, though he sees the sun rise every morning, he never goes abroad till six or seven at night." But even in the "beautiful enchantment" of this earthly paradise, in all the loveliness of a Roman summer, he longs above all things to return home, and asks nothing better than to be allowed "to live quietly for a few months at Penshurst."

But it was many years yet before the wish of the exile's heart was to be granted, and he was to set foot once more on English soil.

CHAPTER XV

1659—1663

Death of Lady Leicester—The Restoration—Lady Anne Cart—
The Strangfords.

IN August 1659, Lady Leicester died. She had been ailing for some months, and on the 10th July made a will bequeathing £1000 to her son Algernon, who, as mentioned in the last chapter, was at Copenhagen at the time, and everything else she possessed to her youngest son, Henry. He was now about eighteen years of age, and was travelling abroad, probably with his nephew, the young Lord Sunderland, under the care of Dr. Pierce. Henry Sidney did not return to Penshurst until the following spring, when Algernon, writing from Denmark, alludes to his brother's safe arrival, and expresses a hope that he is as his father wishes him, and may prove a joy and comfort to him in his loneliness.

Lady Leicester's last act was to leave this beloved son the lands in Kent, which she had bought in her own name, together with an annuity of £200 a year for the term of twenty-one years, and another of a £100 a year "during the life of Dorothy, Countess Dowager of Sunderland." She also bequeathed to him the Princess Elizabeth's diamond necklace, which had been the cause of so many contentions. That Easter she had been compelled to give it up by order of Parliament; but although it was placed in the Exchequer, Lady Leicester had no intention of relinquishing her claim to the jewel, which was again advanced by her husband after the Restoration.

The following extract from her ladyship's will gives some interesting particulars of her other possessions—

“ Having received a liberty from my dear Lord and husband to dispose according to my will of such things as he has at any time bestowed upon me, or that I have bought with the money that has been in my own hands, I do therefore give to my son, Henry Sidney, the French plate, the Mortlake hangings, all my pictures, my black cabinets, my looking-glasses, my porcelain, books at Leicester House and Penshurst, or whatever has been bought with my own, except such things as may be useful to my Lord ; and in respect of divers wrought beds, gilt leather hangings, and several other things which have been provided by me, I desire, that if it stand with my Lord’s liking, that he will appoint these things for him after his own decease, or that he may have in lieu of them £500 in money ; and because it will be very convenient to my son Henry Sidney’s concernment to make what money may be gotten between this and Michaelmas, I desire that Smith and Higgins may be employed to sell these several things to the best advantage : these requests I do recommend to my dear Lord and husband, under my hand and seal,

“ D. LEICESTER.

“ *10th July, 1659.*”

Henry Sidney probably preferred to have his mother’s bequest in money, and many of the objects here specified, the Mortlake tapestry, blue Nankin china, and black cabinets, are still to be seen at Penshurst.

A few weeks after this will was drawn up, Lady Leicester became worse, and finally died on the 20th of August. Of all her large family only her two unmarried daughters, Anne and Diana, who was still a child, were with her at the end. Lord Leicester gives the following account of her last moments in his usual natural and forcible manner—

“ *Saturday, 20th August, 1659.*—Between 6 and 7 o’clock in the morning my wife sent one of her women, who came in some haste to tell me that she desyred to speake with me ; I was not yet out of my bed, but I put on my clothes as fast as I could, and came and kneeled by her bedside, where she had caused herself to be raysed and sate up, being stayed by

two of her women ; I tooke her by the hand and kissed it ; she inclined her face towards me to kiss me, and sayd : ‘ My dearest heart, before I dye, I desyre to say a few words unto you, and many I cannot say. Lord God above all, feare Him and serve Him ; my love hath been great and constant to you,’—then she wept gently—‘and I beseech you pardon my anger, my angry words, my passions, and whatsoever wherein I have offended you, even all my faults and failings towards you ; pray for me now, in this my weake estate and neare approche of death. Commend me to my deare boy. I should have been glad to see him before I dye, but it is not God’s will to have it so. I recommend him to God and you, and earnestly desyre you to be carefull of him ; keepe all your promises, and trouble not yourself for me ; and I pray God that you may live happily when I am gone, and that God will be pleased to take you at that time then He shall finde it best for you. Pray for me ; feare God, love God, serve God ; remember me and love my memory. Think continually upon eternity. I can saye no more ; and so, my deare lord, farewell.’ Then inclining her face to mine, as well as she could, and gently pressing my hand, she sayd : ‘ God bless you : and now lay me down to rise no more.’ Then Mr. Lee came, and prayed ; at which, both with eyes and handes upraised, she showed, with her eyes and handes, many great signes of devotion and resignation to God ; and at the saying of the Lord’s Prayer she lifted up her handes and eyes, and I perceived her lips moved, saying, as I believe, the same prayers with us, though I could not heare her ; and so likewise at the benediction and conclusion of our prayers. Then she called for her daughter, Anne Sydney, to whom, kneeling by her bed syde, she sayd : ‘ Nan, I confess that I have been sometimes sharpe and unkinde to you, but I have allwayes loved you well. I desyre you to forgive all my passions and sharp speeches.’ Then she kissed her, and said : ‘ Pray forgive me ; so farewell, God bless you. Now,’ sayd she, ‘ I pray draw the curtaines,’ which being done, I sate downe by the bed syde and heard her groane, but gently, and not very painfully, as I thought, but rather moaning than groaning. Then thinking that she was in a little slumber I left her, and

went to despatch some businesses which she desyred to be done; and having finished it, I came again to her bed syde, and she having caused herself to be turned, I softly opened the curtaines of the other syde towards the window, which let in some light; she looked upon me, but said nothing. 'My hart,' says I, 'do you know me?' 'Yes, very well,' sayd she. 'I have done that which you desyred, and I desyre you to declare before these witnesses (that was Mr. Houghton, Mr. Lee, Mr. Burrow, and Mr. Knyvett), if it be your desyre and will to consent unto these wrytings, which Mr. Houghton hath drawn according to your appointment, which I have sealed, and so have your trustees, concerning your son, Harry Sydney.' 'Yes,' sayd she, 'it is my desyre.' 'Then,' sayd I, 'are you contented to have your seale put to them and to take it off?' 'With all my hart,' sayd she; 'but shall not I put my hande to them?' 'It would be better so,' sayd I, 'but thus it will be well enough, and that perhaps would be too much trouble to you.' 'No,' sayd she, 'I thinke I can wryte my name, if you will stay my hand.' Then the wrytings being brought, and a thin booke held under the place where she should set her name, she tooke the pen, and more strongly than I expected, she put it into the inke herself, and wrote her name to 4 or 5 severall wrytings.

"Then sayd she to me, 'My dear hart, I thanke you, and I pray God to bless to our deare boy that which you and I have done for him.' Then finding herself very weake, she called for some of Dick's cordiall, and having drunk it, she espied Gilbert Spencer, my servant. 'Gilbert,' sayd she, 'farewell; I thanke you for your goodwill, and for the services that you have done me, and I give you my little bag.' Then she desyred to take her leave of her old servants, John Charlton, Frank Hamms, and James Wynch, all three by name, but they being not readily in the way, she said to me, 'I pray, my heart, tell them that I desyred to bid them farewell, and,' sayd she, 'there is a good woman, Cicely Freeman, who hath been very kinde to me, and many times she hath come to me to see me when by reason of my weakness I have not seen her, I desire you to excuse me to her.'

"I promised to do all she had desyred of me; then she

thanked me again, and then having kissed her, she layd her head lower on the pillow, and I drew the curtain, leaving her inclining to slumber, and gently groaning or moaning as she had done before. That day I dined not, but about one o'clock I came to her bed syde and heard her make the same noyse, and when they offered her any nourishment or cordiall she refused it; and so again about three o'clock, and so at other times when I came; and last of all after five o'clock, a little before prayers, I came again, and she lay as she had done, having taken nothing at all; and at seven o'clock I went to prayers, and as the minister was reading one came running to call me. I presently went out of the chappell and came to her bed syde—"

He had not the heart to go on; and here the story, more moving in its simplicity than the most eloquent language, comes to an abrupt end. Ten days later the Earl wrote the following letter to Lord Northumberland, who had always been a faithful and affectionate brother, and who now deplored his sister's loss as "almost the worst that could befall him."

"MY LORD,—In the greatest sorrow that I have ever suffered, your Lordship hath given me the greatest consolation that I could receive from anybody in this world, for having lost that which I loved best, your Lordship secureth me from losing that which I loved next; that is your favour, to which, having no right nor claime, by any worthyness in myself, but only by that alliance of which my most deare Wife was the mediation, I might justly feare the loss of that also, if your Lordship's charity towards me did not prevent it. And now I will presume to tell your Lordship, that though you have lost an excellent sister, who by her affection and reverence towards you highly deserved of you, yet such was her death, that your Lordship hath reason to rejoyce at her departure. And if I were Christian good enough to conceive the happiness of the other life, and that I could have loved her enough, it might have been to me a pleasure to see her dye as she dyed: but being unable to repair my own loss with the consideration of her own advantage, I must ever grieve for the one, untill I may be partaker of the other; and as I shall ever

whilst I live pay to her memory all affection and respects, so for her sake that loved you so dearly, and was so beloved of your Lordship, and for the high estimation which I have always had of your Lordship, I beseech you to let me remaine in your favour, and to be assured of my being

“Your Lordship’s faithfulest, humble Servant,

“LEYCESTER.

“PENSHURST, 31 *Aug.*, 1659.”

These expressions of regard for Lord Northumberland were no mere figures of speech, and during the remainder of what he calls his “sad and solitary life,” Lord Leicester clung more closely than ever to his wise and able brother-in-law, who had proved so excellent a friend to him and all his family in the past. But the loss of his wife was to him irreparable. With all her faults and failings, impulsive and irritable, over-anxious and fretful, as she acknowledged herself to be, Lady Leicester was a genuinely good and loving woman, and had proved herself the best of wives and mothers. Her children—those children whose interests and well-being she had so much at heart to the very end—one and all loved her tenderly, and wept for her long. And among the tributes paid to her memory, none was more heartfelt than that of Algernon Sidney, the one perhaps of all her children whose great qualities she had appreciated the least. When the news reached him, he wrote from Copenhagen to his father on the 5th of November—

“MY LORD,—The passage of letters from England is soe uncertain, that I did not until within this very fewe dayes hear the sad news of my mother’s death. I was then with the King of Sweden, at Nykoping in Falster. This is the first opportunity I have had of sending to condole with your Lordship in a losse that is soe great to your self and your family, of which my sense was not soe much diminished, in being prepared by her long, languishing, and certainly incurable sickness, as increased by the last words of her life. I confess, persons in such tempers are most fit to die, but they are alsoe most wanted here ; and we, that for a while are left

in the world, are most apt, and perhaps with reason, to regret the loss of those we much want. It may be, light and humane passions are most suitably employed upon human and worldly things, wherein we have some sensible concernments, thoughts absolutely abstracted from ourselves are most suitable unto that steadinesse of mind that is much spoken of, little sought, and never found."

The following year witnessed the Restoration of King Charles II. Early in April, Lord Northumberland wrote urging Lord Leicester to come to town, and give his brother peers the benefit of his counsel at this critical moment of public affairs, and informed him of the strong inclination there was to bring in the King, and re-establish the Government upon the old foundations. Lord Leicester, however, shrank from returning to public life, and it needed much persuasion on his brother-in-law's part, before he could be prevailed upon to quit his retreat.

But we know that he was present at Charles II.'s entry into London, on the 29th of May, and took his place among the peers who kissed the King's hand at Whitehall. That day the confusion and crowd were so great that Charles scarcely distinguished one person from another, and took no particular notice of his father's old servant. Lord Leicester accordingly was the more surprised when, two days afterwards, a messenger arrived at Leicester House, summoning both himself and Lord Northumberland into the royal presence. Together they went to Whitehall, a little uneasy in mind, and not knowing what reception they would meet with. But to their surprise, says Lord Leicester in his Journal, "contrary to his and to my expectation," they were most graciously received, and sworn Privy Councillors on the spot. So the old Earl remained in town considerably longer than he had expected, and it was not till the middle of October that he asked the King's leave to retire to his "poore house," and received "a gracious dismission" from his Majesty.

"*Friday, the 12th October, 1660.*—Having attended the Parliament till it was adjourned the 13th September, and afterward the King and Counsell, my health and business

requiring it, I minded to go into the country, and the same day, the 12th of October, after the King and Counsell were risen, I went to the King and sayde, 'Sir, I have not the vanity to thinke that your Majestye will miss me or take notice of my absence, but having the honor to be your servant, I thought it would not agree with my duty to go from hence without your leave and permission, which I beseech your Majesty to grant, that I may go into the country for my health.' The King, with a favourable and smiling countenance, sayd, 'With all my heart, but how long will you stay?' 'Sir,' said I, 'to myself I have professed to stay a good while, unless your Majesty command the contrary.' 'Whether do you go?' sayd the King, still with a smiling countenance. 'Sir,' sayd I, 'to my house in Kent.' 'Well,' sayd the King, 'and when will you come again?' 'Sir,' said I, 'it is for my health I go, but if your Majestye's service require it, I shall not consider either my health or life itself, but will be where you please to command me.' 'I thanke you,' sayd the King, 'but for the present I have no occasion to stay you, I wish you a good journey.' 'I pray God bless your Majestye,' sayd I, 'with health, long life, and all happiness.' 'I thanke you,' sayd the King, again with the same favourable countenance, and gave me his hand, which I, kneeling down, kissed, and so came from him, who stayed to let me say more to him if I would. The like favourable entertainment he gave me the first time also, which I had forgotten, in the Counsell Chamber, when I was sworne, for he came to me, spake very familiarly to me, and gave me many gracious expressions of his favour, and more than ordinary good opinion and esteeme. This should have been before, but forgotten."

The merry monarch knew the way to his subject's heart, and his smiles and kind words were balm to the old servant, who had never forgotten the affronts he had received from the late King at Oxford. And still more gratifying it was to him, when, soon after this, a portion of the arrears owing to him for his expenses during his embassy to France under Charles I., were paid him.

Nor were his dead son-in-law's claims forgotten. On the

14th of October, 1662, a warrant was issued by the Council for the payment of £1000 to Dorothy, Countess Dowager of Sunderland, to be continued yearly for four years, in discharge of the sum of £5000 lent by the late Earl to the late King. Whether the debt was fully paid we do not hear, but a curious warrant issued at Whitehall, a year and a half later, gives the Countess Dowager the eighth part of profits in certain concealed waste lands in several counties, to be discovered at her own charge.

Once he had paid his respects to the King, Lord Leicester was glad to retire to Penshurst. He pleaded the infirmities of his advancing age as an excuse for his absence from the Coronation festivities, and the King's State visit to Westminster, in the following spring. Both he and Lord Northumberland felt they had grown too old for the gallantries of a young Court, and did not care to swell the crowd of hungry courtiers who beset the throne with requests for place and advancement.

As he wrote to his son Algernon, he had no wish but to pass the small remainder of his days innocently and quietly in his poor habitation, and, if it please God, be gathered in peace to his fathers. He lived seventeen years longer, although his declining health prevented him from ever leaving Penshurst, and he complains, in his letter to his son, that failing sight and faltering hand make it almost impossible for him to write. To this cause, no doubt, we owe the cessation of his Journal, which comes to an end early in 1661. One of the last entries records the death of his sister-in-law, our old friend Lady Carlisle, whose wiles had turned so many heads, who had plotted and intrigued with every party in turn, and was still as active and lively as ever. This busy stateswoman died very suddenly at Little Cassiobury House, on the 5th of November, 1660, as she was in the act of going to Court, to see her old friend, the Queen-mother. "She had dined well, but about two hours after, she was suddenly taken, as she was cutting a piece of ribbon, and called for her chayre to go to the Court, where the Queen then was, but, without ever speaking one word, she dyed about 5 or 6 o'clock. It may be observed that it was upon the

5th of November, the day of the Powder Treason, for which her father was suspected and imprisoned. She was younger than my wife, by almost just as much time as she outlived her; for my wife was borne in July, about St. James' day, and dyed the 20th of August, aged 61 yeares and one month, and the Lady Carlisle, her sister, was borne about Michaelmas, and dyed aged 61 yeares and a little more than a month."

Three months later, another memorable figure of by-gone days passed away. This was Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, the daughter of James I., and mother of Prince Rupert, whose beauty and grace had won for her the name of the Queen of Hearts, and whose chequered life had been a strange tissue of brilliant triumphs and of dire misfortunes. Now she came to end her troubled days at her nephew's Court, and Lord Leicester, at Charles II.'s request, lent her his town residence of Leicester House. But before she had been there a week, a sudden attack of illness carried her off, on the 13th of February, 1661, at the age of sixty-five.

Lord Leicester, in a letter addressed to Lord Northumberland, four days later, after thanking him for a present of French melon seeds, which his brother-in-law had sent him in great abundance and variety for his garden, proceeds to comment on the news.

"I heare, that as your Lordship foretold in your letter, my Royal tenant is departed. It seemed the Fates did not think it fit that I should have the honor, which indeed I never much desyred, to be the landlord of a Queene. It is pittie that she lived not a few houres more, to dye upon her wedding-day, and that there is not as good a poet to make her epitaph as Doctor Donne, who wrote her Epithalamium upon that day, unto St. Valentine."

The same year—1661—witnessed a domestic event which, in the eyes of the old Earl, was one of the most grievous calamities which had befallen him in his whole life. His daughter, Lady Anne, the poor Nan of whom her mother craved pardon for her sharp speeches on her deathbed, having reached the mature age of thirty-four, and being yet a spinster, thought well to marry Mr. Joseph Cart, the new Vicar of Leigh, and chaplain to the household at Penshurst.

The step was a grave *mésalliance* in the sight of her contemporaries, and it is not surprising to learn that her father refused to give his consent to the match. Whether he so far forgave her as to see her again during his lifetime, we do not know, but there is no mention of her in his will, where both his other surviving daughters, Dorothy Lady Sunderland, and Lady Lucy Pelham, are expressly named. Nor do we find any mention of Lady Anne in any other of the Penshurst manuscripts, or of her brothers' and sisters' letters from this time. She vanishes from our sight, and is forgotten, in the oblivion of the lowly lot which had been her choice, and for the sake of which she had dared to brave the opposition of her friends and the scorn of the world. But she had a peaceful and smiling home in the vicarage at Leigh, the beautiful village on the borders of the park of Penshurst, and if the inscription on the monument raised by her husband to her memory speaks true, she was fondly loved and deeply mourned. Lady Anne, who is there described as a creature as divine in body as she was in mind, had several children, among others a daughter, to whom she gave the name of Dorothy, and a son called Sidney, both of whom are buried by their mother's side in the church at Leigh. Another son, John Cart, succeeded his father, and was from 1706 to 1739 Vicar of Leigh. At least this daughter of the Sidneys enjoyed a smoother life and larger measure of domestic happiness than her unfortunate sister, Isabella, whose miserable existence came to an end about this time.

Lord Strangford, after squandering almost the whole of his princely fortune, was forced to retire to his ancestral home at Westenhangar, where he and his wife lived for a few years in dire penury, having "not so much as a shilling to call their own." Here Lady Strangford died in June, 1663, of a broken heart. She was not yet twenty-nine, when she was buried in the family vault of the Smythes, in the south transept of Ashford Church. "Maddam Strangford, June 28, 1663," is the brief sad entry which records her burial in the parish registers. She left no son, and only one daughter. But her husband soon married again, and had several sons by his second wife, a daughter of Endymion Porter. In 1664, an

Act of Parliament was passed enabling him to sell his estates in order to pay his debts, special mention being made of Algernon Sidney among the creditors.

The remainder of his life was spent in abject poverty, and when he died in 1708, his son, the third Viscount, found himself so poor that he was compelled to live abroad, and applied for the poor peers' pension to save him and his mother from actual starvation. In the present century, his descendant, the distinguished Ambassador, Lord Strangford, recovered the Kentish home of his fathers, and endeavoured to retrieve the fortunes of his family. But he did not live to restore the mansion at Westenhanger, and the once stately home of the Smythes is now a ruin, with little but the name to recall its past splendour.

CHAPTER XVI

1663—1666

Lady Sunderland at Rufford—The Savile Brothers—Henry Savile's Letters—Robert, Lord Sunderland, and Anne, his Wife.

WHILE the old home at Penshurst was slowly breaking up, we find Lady Sunderland forming new ties and new friendships in another direction. The children whose early youth she had watched over so tenderly, were now growing up and shaping careers for themselves. In 1656, only four years after her own marriage to Sir Robert Smythe, her elder daughter Dorothy—the Popet to whom Lord Sunderland alludes so fondly in his last letters—was married at Althorp to Sir George Savile, the distinguished statesman, better known by his later name of Lord Halifax. Lady Dorothy was only sixteen at the time, but with her mother's name she had inherited a large share of her wit and beauty, and was a bride worthy of this brilliant and cultivated gentleman. Halifax himself was seven years older than his wife, and belonged to a well-known Yorkshire family, the Saviles of Thornhill, noted for their loyalty to the King's cause in the Civil War. His father, Sir William Savile, a nephew of the great Lord Strafford, had gallantly defended Leeds and Sheffield against the Parliamentary forces, and after his death in 1644, his widow, who was besieged in the Castle of Sheffield, resolved to perish rather than surrender. It was not till the walls were actually battered in that the garrison gave up the keys. They were allowed to march out with the honours of war, and the following night the heroic lady gave birth to a posthumous child, who died, however, soon afterwards. To this brave

mother, the young Saviles owed the education which fitted them for the high posts they afterwards held in the public service. She herself was a woman of considerable ability, a daughter of the Lord Keeper Coventry, and sister of the accomplished Sir William Coventry who held office in Charles II.'s reign, and was so intimate a friend of the Sidneys that, on his death at Tunbridge Wells, he was buried in Penshurst Church.

The marriage accordingly was a source of great satisfaction to Lady Sunderland. She herself found in her new son-in-law a friend whose companionship and loyal affection was to prove one of the brightest joys of her later years. His refined love of letters and speculative turn of mind exactly suited her tastes. She understood him better and valued his fine qualities more truly than perhaps any of his contemporaries. And Halifax, on his part, gave her his confidence freely, and was grateful for the generous sympathy with which it was received. In all the storms and perilous times of public life, when Halifax was attacked on every side and his old partisans turned against him to a man, Dorothy never lost faith in him, and he in his turn stood by her loyally, and remained her "perfect and constant good friend" to the end.

But as yet these troubled days were far distant, and Halifax was still plain Sir George, living with his fair young wife in his beautiful home at Rufford, in the heart of Sherwood Forest. This old Abbey, originally founded by a colony of Cistercian monks from Rievaulx, had been the family seat of the Saviles since their ancestral hall at Thornhill had been burnt to the ground in the Civil Wars, by order of the last baronet, who could not bear to see his own house garrisoned by rebel forces. All through his life, the great statesman loved the leafy shades and clear waters of his Nottinghamshire home, and when detained at Court by the duties of his office, he pined, with the longing of an absent lover, for poor old Rufford, which, in its "fine green coat" of summer foliage, seemed to him fairer than Windsor in all its glory. Here he could give himself up to the enjoyment of the books and pictures which he was always collecting, and, "forgetting the tumult of angry tongues and heated brains which make

London a worse place to sleep in than a wasps' nest," could enjoy the delights of this rural solitude, and say with Horace, *Beatus ille qui procul negotiis*. For several years after her marriage, young Lady Dorothy had no children, so there were great rejoicings when, in February 1661, her eldest son was born. He was named Henry after her lamented father, and Sir George's brother, young Henry Savile, wrote from Lyons, where he was pursuing his studies, that he was much concerned to hear his nephew was to bear his name, but wished with all his heart that he might prove "as fatt and as fare-liking as his namesake, and have his health as perfect as it has pleased God to give it me. In all other things," he goes on, "I would have him resemble you, and be your successor in all your good qualities, for, without flattering you, I am confident the best wish that I can wish him is that he may be like his father." And he congratulates himself that he is as rightly cut out for a bachelor as ever was any man, since the fairest ladies cannot tempt him to change his estate. He is therefore much obliged to nature that has made him a younger brother, and so presents his "most humble service to my Lady Dorothy."

These allusions to his own corpulence are very common in Harry Savile's letters, and when Halifax hears that his brother has bought him a rare French work in six volumes, he remarks that in spite of the Spanish proverb, *es descredito el mucho*, he is tied to no opinion which does not allow of some exception, "especially when your own person is such an instance, that there may be a great deal of what is very good."

The two brothers were much attached to each other. Halifax, as Henry Savile owns, invariably acted the part of a kind elder brother, helping him with advances of money and abundance of good advice always pleasantly given; while the younger man in his turn paid great deference to the elder's opinion, although he never scrupled to tell him his mind on most subjects with perfect frankness.

The next letter we have from this gay young man, who, according to Clarendon, was a youth of much wit but incredible presumption, is written a year later from Spain,

where he was travelling in company with his sister-in-law's brother, Robert Lord Sunderland, and her uncle, Henry Sidney. Both these young men were exactly his own age, and were destined to be fast friends throughout their public career. When Henry Savile wrote to his brother on the 5th of December, 1662, they had reached Madrid, and their experiences of that capital in winter were by no means encouraging.

“DEAR BROTHER,—Since I writ to you from Bourdeaux, we have been so diligent in performing our journey, that we have been in this town a week, which seems already to be a year ; so wretched and miserable a place we are got into. It is really so much worse than Grantham in all kinds, that I cannot but wish myself in some wise there, where I am confident it is easier to be provided with all manner of conveniences, than in any town in Spain. That it is warmer at the Orcades than here nobody doubts, but I suppose they have chimneys there to warm them ; but we can find none here, nor anything else that is used in any other part of the world. There is neither house to live in, bed to lie in, coach to go in, chair to sit on, nor garden to walk in, that are not contrived in such a manner that without asking it is impossible to know what they are. My Lord Sunderland and Mr. Sidney will, I believe, agree with me in the character of this worthy town, and since my lord writes to you this post, I will say no more of it, but leave it to him to inform you how happy men we are. His lordship has got the victory over us both in travelling, for he has borne his journey without the least trouble of either fatigue or indisposition, whilst both Mr. Sidney and myself were eternally out of order, and have not yet so well recovered our voyage but that almost every day we have some ill hours. I have lately received none from my ague, which I hope is quite gone, or at least that it will not trouble me any more whilst I stay here, for Madrid and an ague too would be a double curse. There is so little else to be done here, that we must learn Spanish in our own defence, though I intend to do it with a good will, and hope to succeed accordingly. I confess I should be very

sorry not to have a good share of that and other languages, because those are the necessary qualities that are to make me fit to be the governour to Mr. Mopp [a nickname for his infant nephew], an employment I do expect when he is big enough to make tours; in the meantime I desire an office under that worthy person his father, which is that of being in a civil way, dear brother, your most affectionate br: and most humble servant,

“HEN. SAVILE.”

The young Lord Sunderland, who is mentioned as so good a traveller by his companion was now two-and-twenty, and had already shown signs of the splendid talents and wilful character that marked his career. Many years of his boyhood had been spent in travelling through France and Italy, acquiring those foreign languages which he afterwards conversed in with so much fluency, and finishing his education under Dr. Pierce's superintendence. When he was seventeen he went to Oxford, and his tutor, who had been presented by Lady Sunderland to the Rectory of Brington, was constrained to part, not without grief, as we have read, from his promising pupil.

Good Dr. Pierce, however, can hardly have been edified by his hopeful pupil's doings at college. He made friends at Christchurch with William Penn the Quaker, an intimate associate of his uncle Algernon's, and joined him in opposing the revival of what Penn held to be Popish practices in the University. In 1660, an order came from the King that Christchurch students should wear the surplice at prayers, according to the old custom. William Penn felt it his duty to protest against this innovation, of which he disapproved on conscientious grounds, and with his friend Sunderland and some other noisy companions he fell on the students who appeared in surplices, and tore the “Popish rag” to pieces. The result was that Penn and several of his associates were expelled. We do not learn if the young Earl shared the same fate, or if, as was probably the case, the influence of his powerful friends exempted him from the penalty.

Soon after his return from his travels in Spain, with Henry

Savile and his uncle, Henry Sidney, he began to pay his addresses to Lady Anne Digby, the youngest daughter of the Earl of Bristol, whom he eventually married. Henry Savile, writing to his brother from London, on May 4th, observes that they have no doubt heard at Rufford from my Lord Sunderland himself of the progress he makes in his "amours," of which he could tell them little, since he never now sees him excepting in society, and that seldom.

Pepys, in his Diary of July 1st, 1663, tells a strange story of the young Earl's behaviour on the eve of his marriage.

"I hear that my Lord Sunderland, whom I do not know, was so near to the marriage of Lord Bristol's daughter, as that the wedding clothes were made, and portion and everything agreed upon, and ready. And the other day he goes away, nobody yet knows whither, sending the next morning a release of his right and claim to her, and advice to his friends not to inquire into the reason of his doing, for he hath enough of it, and that he gives them liberty to say and think what they will of him, so that they do not demand the reason of his leaving her, being resolved never to have her."

This wayward fit however did not last long, the quarrel was soon made up, and in less than a month's time the wedding took place. The new Lady Sunderland was a very different person from the last one. She was a lovely and fascinating woman, to judge from her portraits, and her picture was painted by Sir Peter Lely, among the Beauties of Charles II.'s Court, at Hampton Court.

But the contradictory accounts which contemporary writers give, makes it very difficult to arrive at a just estimate of her character. She inherited both the talents and the inconsistencies of her father, that singular nobleman whose life Walpole describes as one perpetual contradiction. "He wrote against Popery and embraced it. He was a zealous opposer of the Court, and a sacrifice for it; was conscientiously converted in the midst of his prosecution of Lord Strafford, and was most unconscientiously a prosecutor of Lord Clarendon. With great parts he always hurt himself and his friends. With romantic bravery, he was always an unsuccessful commander. He spoke for the Test Act, though a Roman

Catholic, and addicted himself to Astrology on the birthday of true philosophy.”

Lord Bristol's daughter resembled him in more ways than one. There can be no doubt that she possessed great talents and energy, as well as personal charms. The prudence and economy with which she managed her household at Althorp, roused the admiration of all her guests, as we learn from her friend Evelyn. But she was a born *intrigante*, forever plotting and scheming, now in one quarter, now in another. Her intimacy with her husband's uncle, Henry Sidney, brought discredit upon her name, and the French envoy Barillon alludes constantly, in his letters to Louis XIV., to the *commerce de galanterie* that exists between Madame Sunderland and Monsieur Sidney. But this correspondence was evidently conducted with her husband's connivance. By this means, the unscrupulous minister was able to win the favour of the Prince of Orange, who, as Lady Sunderland's keen eyes early recognized, was “the plant to be cultivated.”

That there was a better side to her character is evident from her friendship with Evelyn, who was for many years her confidant and trusted correspondent, and who liked and honoured her as much as he despised and disliked her husband.

“I wish from my soul,” he wrote, “my Lord her husband, whose parts and abilities are otherwise conspicuous, were as worthy of her, as by a fatal apostacy and cant-ambition he has made himself unworthy of her. This is what she deplores, and it renders her as much affliction, as a lady of great sense and much prudence is capable of.”

But there were others at Court who had the lowest opinion of her. The Princess Anne and Clarendon agreed that she was one of the worst women in the world, and Anne especially hated her cordially. In a letter to her sister, the Princess of Orange, written in the reign of James II., only a few months before the Revolution, she gives the following amusing description both of Lord and Lady Sunderland—

“You may remember I have, once before, ventured to tell you that I thought Lord Sunderland a very ill man, and I am more confirmed every day in that opinion. Everybody knows

how often this man turned backwards and forwards in the late King's time, and now, to complete all his virtues, he is working with all his might to bring in Popery. He is perpetually with the priests, and stirs up the King to do things faster than I believe he would of himself. Things are come to that pass now, that if they go on so much longer, I believe, in a little while, no Protestant will be able to live here. The worthy Lord does not go publicly to mass, but hears it privately at a priest's chamber, and never lets anybody be there, but a servant of his. His lady too is just as extraordinary in her kind, for she is a flattering, dissembling false woman, but she has so fawning and endearing a way that she will deceive anybody at first, and it is not possible to find out all her ways in a little time. She will cheat, though it be for a little. Then she has had her gallants, although, maybe, not so many as some ladies here, and with all these good qualities she is a constant Church-woman, so that to outward appearance one would take her for a saint, and to hear her talk, you would think she was a very good Protestant, but she is as much the one as the other, for it is certain that her Lord does nothing without her. She plays the hypocrite more than ever; for she goes to St. Martin's morning and afternoon, because there are not people enough to see her in Whitehall Chapel, and is at church half an hour before other people come, and half an hour after everybody is gone, at her private devotions. She runs from church to church after the famousest preachers, and keeps such a clatter with her devotion that it really turns one's stomach. Sure there never was a couple so well matched as she and her good husband, for she is the greatest jade that ever lived, so is he the subtlest working villain on the face of the earth."

The Princess was right in the main. Certainly Lady Sunderland possessed a singular capacity for playing two parts. No contrast could be greater than that we find between her letters to Evelyn, and those to Henry Sidney. To the one she pours out her religious feelings, telling him how she is learning every day of her life to care less for the world, asking his prayers for her husband, who, she rejoices to think, has at length seen the error of his ways and is a true

penitent, while at the same moment, in her correspondence with Sidney, she is carrying on political intrigues, with a craftiness and dissimulation worthy of Sunderland himself. At one time she is moving heaven and earth to discover the secrets of some political opponent, at another all her energies are bent to secure a rich heiress for her son. Yet her fits of devotion were probably real while they lasted, and her friendship for Evelyn survived many strains.

It would be interesting to know what opinion Lord Sunderland's mother had of her daughter-in-law. Her mother was a Russell, sister of that Earl of Bedford who had been talked of by the gossips as a suitable match for Sacharissa in her prime, and is described by Evelyn as "a grave and honourable lady." But her daughter-in-law is seldom mentioned in Dorothy's letters, and the two ladies never seem to have been on intimate terms. The prominent part which the young Countess played in political intrigues of the day probably excited her mother-in-law's distrust and suspicion, especially as on most occasions she was violently opposed to Sacharissa's noble friend, Lord Halifax. But, whatever Dorothy thought of her son's wife in private, she was too wise and too loyal to express her opinion in her letters.

After his marriage Lord Sunderland received a commission in Prince Rupert's regiment, in the same troop to which his brother-in-law, Sir George Savile, belonged. But he still kept his taste for travelling, and we hear of him as crossing over to France early in 1665.

In the same year both Henry Savile and Henry Sidney were appointed Grooms of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York. Henry Sidney, who was now twenty-five years of age and had the reputation of being the handsomest man at Court, promptly fell in love with his royal mistress, and although according to the best authorities the Duchess was "kind unto him and no more," the scandal reached the Duke's ears, and the too daring servant one day suddenly received his dismissal. He retired to Penshurst, and afterwards served under Sir William Temple in Ireland, but it was many years before he was again allowed to show his face at Court. His colleague was more prudent, or better conducted,

although Pepys intimates that he too was a favourite with his mistress, and says that "the Duchess is reported to have fallen in love with both her new Masters of the Horse, one Harry Sidney, the other Harry Savile." He remained for four years in the service of the Duke of York, and accompanied his master to sea several times. In August 1666, he was on board the Duke's flag-ship, when, as Lord High Admiral, he sailed against the Dutch fleet, and was present at the naval fight off the North Foreland. It is to Harry Savile's letters that we owe the next glimpses that we have of Sacharissa.

Here we find her once more, after all these years, in her daughter's house at Rufford. Circumstances have changed, death and sorrow have again wrought havoc among those dear to her. Her second husband, that faithful lover and gallant gentleman, Sir Robert Smythe, is dead, her son is married, and Althorp is no longer her home. But she is still surrounded by true friends and loving hearts, and finds herself a welcome and honoured guest in Lord Halifax's beautiful country home. Waller's prophecy has been literally fulfilled, and her grandchildren are growing up about her. Besides the son and heir, whose arrival has been already mentioned, Lady Dorothy gave birth to three more children during the next few years. First came a daughter, Lady Anne, the "dear Nan" whom her grandmother so often mentions in her letters, and who was the object of her father's "chief care and kindness," the darling child for whom he wrote his famous *Advice to a Daughter*. "Nan" was born in 1663, her brother William, who eventually succeeded his father as second Marquis of Halifax, in 1665, and two years later, George, the third and youngest son, who was dangerously wounded at the siege of Buda in 1686, and died unmarried in 1688.

During these years, Lady Sunderland spent most of her time at Rufford, and from the frequent mention we find of her name in Henry Savile's letters, it would almost appear that she made her home there, from 1663 to the autumn of 1667, if not later. With her was her younger daughter Penelope, then about twenty-three or twenty-four years of

age. This Lady Pen was the object of much raillery and joking on Harry Savile's part, and seems to have been as bright and lively as the sister whose early death she too was destined to share.

But although a grandmother, and for the second time in her life a widow, Sacharissa had lost none of her charm in the eyes of the rising generation. Her conversation was as full of wit, her letters as much sought after as ever. At fifty, she was as popular and as much admired as fifteen years before, when she gave her hand to Mr. Smythe, to all the world's wonder. And she herself was always happy at Rufford, and looked back upon those summers which she spent there with tender recollection. These green and shady walks, that "fair broad lake," these "grassy banks and running streams" were as dear to her as they were to Halifax himself. "That you have, my dear lord," she wrote to her son-in-law twelve years afterwards, "but a thought of my seeing sweet Rufford again, gives me a dream of happiness."

Many are the pleasant pictures of the home circle at Rufford, which Henry Savile gives us in his letters. His own affection for his "mother earth," as he calls the old home, was as real as that of his brother. He is always talking of the place, and longing to get away from Whitehall to that Paradise of the North, that land of promise, where he would rather spend his days than in the finest palace of smoky London. To be a country gentleman, he always declares, is the passion of his life, and a thing more to be coveted than the highest post in any court of the world. Whether this passion was more genuine than that craze for rural life which many fashionable men and women of the day affected, or whether there really was, as he says in a letter from Paris, "somewhat in our blood that affects ease and quiet," it is hard to say. But the frequency of his letters show how fondly attached he was to his brother and all his family. And he certainly was an admirable correspondent. Sometimes he writes to his brother, sometimes to his sister-in-law, Lady Dorothy, who was always eager to hear the latest gossip of the day, and impatient for the next letter from town. There is one which he addressed to her in the summer of 1666,

after a visit which he had paid to Tunbridge Wells, where the Duke of York had sent him to pay his respects to the Queen, who was then taking the waters at these now fashionable springs. He had availed himself of the opportunity to go to Penshurst, and see her brother and his own friend, Lord Sunderland, who was then on a visit to his grandfather. The naval war with the Dutch was at its height when he wrote, and he himself was daily expecting orders to join the Duke at sea.

“LONDON, *Thursday night.*”

“MADAM,—I am to believe you are very angry with me, for not writing, but I hope you will be appeased when you know that I have been out of town, upon an embassy that my master sent me, to the Queen. That Tunbridge is the most miserable place in the world is very certain, and that the ladies do not look with very great advantage at three of the clock in the morning, is as true. I was at Penshurst to see your brother, who is so fatt he can hardly stir, but I did neither see my Lord of Leicester nor my Lady Diana, for I was there betimes in the morning, and stay’d but half an hour. The two fleets were yesterday engaged, but the success is not yet known. By the next post I shall send you word whether you are likely to have your Captain again, or whether he is to be valiant and defend his country [her husband, Sir George Savile, who was out with the militia]. In the meantime we are here very confident. Mr. Digby [Anne, Lady Sunderland’s brother] commands a ship, but by a strange accident was out of the fight, for the day before the battle his main-mast was struck down with thunder, so that he was fain to come to port to mend it. The only volunteers that are gone lately are, my Lord of Rochester, George Hamilton, and Sir Thomas Clifford. My Lady Southampton comes from the waters this week, and the ladies here begin to go down to pay their duty to Her Majesty. My Lady Denham goes this night, my Lady Castlemain and Lady Falmouth go the next week My Lady Sunderland [Anne] goes to Penshurst on Tuesday and so returns hither with her lord, without going to

Petworth, which was their first design. My Lady Anne Boyle has been very sick, but is well enough recovered to be married to Sir Francis Popham the next week. My Lord of Leicester expects his son Harry every day from Ireland, but I had a letter from him last night, where he says nothing of his return. 'Tis said my Lady Muskerry is to be married to Sir Richard Temple. My Lady Mordaunt has been extream ill, but is recovered. My uncle, Harry Coventry, is to go Ambassador to Venice, and I must go about my own business."

CHAPTER XVII

1666—1670

Lady Sunderland's Accident—Robert, Lord Sunderland—Lord Halifax—
Death of Lady Halifax—*Advice to a Daughter.*

THE four following letters were written by Henry Savile in the summer of 1666, and contain repeated allusions to some accident, by which he had been so unfortunate as to injure Lady Sunderland's finger. Lady Pen, it appears, had just arrived in town on a visit to her brother, Lord Sunderland, and had given him the latest news from Rufford.

The first is addressed to Halifax, who had commissioned his brother to buy him a sword and belt for him to wear in his new capacity as captain of the county militia, which had been called out.

“ Thursday night.

“ DEAR BROTHER,—I writ to you the last post, but would not trouble you with news since the ladies have now a so much better correspondent in town, that I am only to entertain you with your own affairs. I shall not send you a sword and belt, unless you will go to the full price of that which is modish ; a handsome belt will cost eight pounds, and if you have a sword for six more, you are a happy man ; but lest you should repine at my extravagance, I thought good to acquaint you beforehand, that so you may resolve to approve of my prodigality. I am so extreamly concern'd for my Lady Sunderland's finger, which Lady Pen tells me is worse than we hoped for, that you are not to expect the least bitt of wit,

in a letter, till she is recover'd, for which she has the daily prayers of

“ Yours, etc.,

“ H. SAVILE.

“ My most humble service to Lady Dorothy.”

The same subject recurs in a letter to his sister-in-law, which was probably enclosed in the former.

“ LONDON, *May y^e 31st*, 1666.

“ MADAM,—I have been less diligent in writing to Rufford, since both your brother and sister are in town, who I am to suppose do not let you want news, since you love it so well, and they have no specious pretence to be silent ; for my own part, all my omissions ought to be pardoned, and you are to presume that a member of the Court cannot be without business enough to serve for an excuse for not writing. I confess though, I should have employed my rhetorick to my Lady Sunderland, but I cannot have the confidence to mention her wound, till I am assured that 'tis cured. My Lord Ashley is gone this day to St. Giles', very weak and sick. Your brother is in town, and plays for all he's worth. Mrs. Temple was marry'd to Sir Charles Lyttleton on Tuesday last, and Mrs. De Vie and my Lord Freshville follow their example the next week. They say she is to be lady of the Duchess's bedchamber. The Dutch are come out with 72 ships, 35 of ours are separated from the main body of the fleet to go look out Monsieur Beaufort at La Rochelle. Prince Rupert commands them. I had a letter last night out of Ireland from our friend Harry [Henry Sidney], who says he is like to stay there a good while yet. Pray send a chiding letter to your sister, for keeping the worst company of any young lady in town, and do not fill up your letters to her with saying I am an odious creature, for I am a very worthy person. She will write you some great news that I sent her, because I dare not write it myself. I will not put your honour to any further trouble, because I am your honour's most humble servant,

“ H. S.”

Lord Sunderland pursued his gambling with more success than he deserved, and in Harry Savile's next letter, written on the 19th of June, he informs his brother that his lordship is gone to Tunbridge a winner above £2000. He concludes by presenting his service to Lady Dorothy, and my Lady Sunderland, whose finger, he grieves to hear, is still useless. Three days afterwards, he takes up his pen and approaches her ladyship in his most gracious and polished style.

“LONDON, *June y^e 22, 1666.*”

“MADAM,—If the unfortunate accident that happened to your Ladyship by my rudeness, could have been remedy'd by my concern, neither you that had the wound, nor I that gave it, should have endured half the trouble it has put us to, and though I might make it an argument of some ease to myself that your Ladyship is out of pain, yet, when I hear that your finger is become wholly useless, I cannot conceive what pennance will countervail so high an offence, or that any repentance should ever absolve me. This I know, that though your Ladyship should have so much mercy as ever to forgive me, I will never pardon myself whilst I live, or at least it shall be the last thing I do upon my death-bed; in the meantime, though I had ten times as much blood in my cheekes, as you have lost from your fair hand, I can never blush enough to have been the author of so great a misfortune. Were I in a condition of giving you the Scripture recompence, I should be too happy, but, sure all my whole worthless body is of so little value, an eye for an eye, or a hand for a hand, would come far short of the satisfaction I ought to pay for rendering useless the fairest hand in the world. What will they say that used to have of your Ladyship's letters? To offer myself to your Ladyship for your secretary is so poor a satisfaction to them, that I shall raise the whole commonwealth of writers against me, to give them my stile after having disabled the most eloquent pen in England. All this, and more I am to suffer, and yet not half of what I deserve; yet it will be some comfort to me in the midst of my afflictions if, abstracting once from this last misfortune, your

Ladyship be pleased to believe that I am with all respect and truth,

“Madam, your Ladyship’s most faithfull, most humble, and most obedient servant,

“HEN. SAVILE.”

And when Lady Sunderland, with her usual good nature, hastened to assure her disconsolate squire of her pardon and the healing of her finger, he returns thanks in another flowery effusion.

“LONDON, *July y^e 7th*, 1666.

“MADAM,—To owe your Ladyship a letter a week is a piece of ill-manners that I am confident could never have happened to me but in time of war, when to prepare ourselves to be rude to the enemy we are fain to practise where ’tis least allowable. I confess, Madam, the honour you were pleased to do me, did very well deserve a speedy acknowledgement, but then I am to tell you again that I was so much surprised with it, that I was not till now well enough recovered to render you my most humble thanks. But, besides your letter, when I remember that you sent me my pardon, I begin to fear this will never come to your hands, for unless you had been dyeing when you sealed my forgiveness, it could never enter into your head to absolve me of so great a crime, so that it looks more like an imposition of the minister to provide you for Heaven, than the voluntary action of a mercifull lady. Be it what it will, I am abundantly overjoyed that there remains no rancour either in your finger or your mind, so that my affliction is to be cured with your wound, and I have nothing to do but entertain my fancy with the pleasant imaginations what great execution I am like to do upon an enemy, when my hands are so apt to shed blood, that they could not forbear spilling some of that for which I would willingly lose all my own. But you will find better champions, especially now that you have a Captain of your own, who, notwithstanding all the ties and obligations he has to your Ladyship, cannot possibly be fuller of zeal to your service, than,

“Madam, your Ladyship’s most faithfull, most humble, and most obedient servant,

“HEN. SAVILE.”

In August, Henry Savile suddenly went off to sea, against the will, he tells his brother, of all his friends and acquaintance, and informed Lady Dorothy of his intention in the following brief note—

“LONDON, *August y^e 9th*, 1666.

“MADAM,—You that have heard most odious things of me shall yet hear one worse, which is, that I am going to sea; if you would know the reason—

‘I go to dye, and in earth’s bowells hide
A soul the angry gods cannot abide.’

Further newes is, that Sir John Coventry is come to towne, Harry Sydney is returned from his father’s, but is not permitted to come to Court. My cousin Thynne is come out of France, and is to be groom of our bed-chamber. To-morrow I set sail, and it is not impossible but I may be fortunate enough never to see England more. Whatever becomes of me, as long as I am a servant to any body, I shall be perfectly to your ladyship.”

He was, to confess the truth, a little fearful of incurring his brother’s displeasure by his precipitate action, for which he had reasons of his own which he did not care to disclose. So he wrote a fortnight later, from on board the *Royal Charles*, then riding at anchor in Southwold Bay.

“*August y^e 27th*, 1666.

“DEAR BROTHER,—I have been in some pain since my being here, that I did not hear from you, imagining that you might be angry with me for this expedition; but my Lord Mulgrave brought me this morning two from you. The last expresses your concern so amply for me, that it is impossible for me ever to express my thanks to you; it is enough that whatever becomes of me, I shall always be full of great and thankfull acknowledgements to you for your extraordinary kindness to me, which never did yet come in doubt with me. Though, according to the rules of it, I do confess I ought to have acquainted you with my design before I undertook it, but your distance may serve for one excuse, though, to speake the truth, had you been nearer I do not believe I should have

told you my secret. To vindicate myself from the great giddyness my uncle accused me of, I did just before my leaving the town tell him the occasion of it, with such an imposition of secrecy as I shall think it safe in his breast ; in the mean time, the reason of my coming, before there was any probability of a fight for some time, gave the learned occasion to give their judgments. If I come back, it will be difficult for me not to discover the occasion of this prank by committing some new one, if it be not prevented this time by my death, and in that case I have left a letter for you in the hands of my uncle, which will clear me to you. Whether you will know it by that or from me, will now soon be decided, for we have news just now that the Dutch are out, and we hope to reach them in two days : so that in order to prepare myself for an enemy, it will be time to take leave of a friend, and put you to no further trouble at present than what your concern for me will give you. I pray, make that as little as you can, and you will the more oblige,

“ My dearest brother, your most passionately affect. brother and most humble servant,

“ H. SAVILE.”

The next day the rival fleets met, and another battle took place off the North Foreland. This time De Ruyter's line was broken and the English were victorious. Harry Savile escaped unhurt, and wrote to his brother, “ We have lost nobody worth hanging.”

After that there is a gap in his correspondence, and his next letter is dated June y^e 18th, 1667. The day before he had seen Lady Dorothy and her “ little chits ” set off on their journey to Rufford in “ fine cool weather.” This summer Lady Sunderland and Lady Pen were again at Rufford, and in all his letters Harry Savile kisses their hands, as well as those of Lady Dorothy. Lord Sunderland is frequently mentioned, and seems to have been as intimate with his old companion as ever. One day we hear of his gambling, another of his encounter with a highwayman.

“ I wonder,” Henry Savile writes on the 22nd of July, “ what crotchet is in your head to imagine there is any secret

in the rencontre of my Lord Sund: If there were any, I suppose I should have known it, having been with him a very few hours after it happen'd, and in spite of any silly report that you may have heard, I assure you it was nothing but a rogue that leap'd from behind a hedge, and cry'd Zounds! your money! and in the same moment gave him two stabs, before he had time to draw his sword. The little news there is in town, I have crammed into my Lady Dorothy's letter, who pretends such a title to that privilege that I dare not write anything to you, but that I am your most submissive younger brother and most diligent servant."

Lord Sunderland, it is plain, was rapidly becoming an important personage. He kept himself continually before the world in one way or another, and showed his usual acuteness in currying favour with all the King's mistresses in turn. Barbara Palmer, Lady Castlemaine, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland, was at that moment the ruling favourite. Lord Sunderland was assiduous in his attentions to the Lady; and before long we hear that she is going to Althorp to pay him and his wife a visit.

In September there was a large party at Althorp, and Halifax and his wife and her mother and sister were among the guests.

"LONDON, *Sept. 5th*, 1667.

"To-morrow," writes Henry Savile, "the great caravan goes down to Althorp: one of the reasons I am not of the number, is that there is no room in the coach, but I think I should have strained that point and come, melancholy in my own chariot, alone, but that my absence would be otherwise look'd upon now, than at another time, and construed as some dissatisfaction either of my uncle's concern or my own, of which there being nothing, my discretion will not give occasion of guessing things that are not; all that is here worth your knowledge you will either have learnt from the letter Sir William [Coventry] writ to you on Tuesday, or from the discourse you may have from H. Sidney, whom I entrusted with all you can know of me. Our friend [Sir William Coventry] has the greatest mind in the world to have

you in town, though he has no present argument to invite you hither. If you look upon his last letter, at the bottom of it there is a blott, which was the beginning of a sentence to draw you hither. I am so much perswaded that it were of use to you to shew yourself at present, that I could wish it most heartily. He has this morning bought a house of Sir Thomas Clarges, for fourteen hundred pounds, 'tis one of those four pretty handsome ones in Pall Mall by my Lady Ranelagh's. Not knowing how to write to you till I knew you were at Althorp, I have not yet given you any account of your money I received from Sir Stephen Fox. I have delivered your greyhound to Harry Sydney's servant, who will convey him to you, and when once you have him, I hope you will forget the former miscarriages concerning him, though upon my word they were not occasion'd by any neglect of mine; if you have a mind to another, I am offer'd an excellent good one, but I believe this will serve you. My Lord of Buckingham has made but few visits to Court, since he came out of his troubles, but was yesterday two hours alone with the King in his closet, which *esclaircissement* I hope will be to his advantage. I have not seen him since myself, and so cannot give you any account of it. I will not put you to any further trouble, but leave you to the good company that is and will be at Althorp."

On the 17th of September Henry Savile again renews his entreaties to his brother to show himself at Court, a piece of advice that Sir George was never in a hurry to follow. There was a plan on foot among his friends to obtain a peerage for him. The suggestion had the active support of the favourite, Buckingham, as well as of other influential persons, and made Sir William Coventry desirous that his nephew should appear at Whitehall without delay. We do not hear if Sir George obeyed the summons, but a few months' later, on the 13th of January, 1668, he was raised to the peerage as Viscount Halifax.

Here again there is a break of two years in the brothers' correspondence, and when Henry Savile next writes to Rufford, it is from Paris, in August 1669. He had gone abroad in disgrace, after spending a fortnight in the Tower,

as a penalty for incurring the royal displeasure, by taking a challenge from his uncle, Sir William Coventry, to the Duke of Buckingham. The duel was stopped, but both Sir William and his nephew were sent to prison, and when they were released, the Duke of York was forbidden to receive his old servant again. Savile however took his misfortune with his usual lightness of heart, and found Paris so pleasant that he was in no hurry to return. In July 1670, he writes to Halifax begging him to use his influence to get him returned as member for Retford at the approaching election, declaring that Sir Edward Dering, a Kentish gentleman who was nominated by the Court, would have no chance against such interest as the Saviles possessed. But Halifax refused to stir in the matter, and was evidently, as Henry Savile very well knew, not over-pleased with his recent escapade.

“You must give me leave,” he wrote, “to think that you can do this, if you have the will, which I have a great reason to believe you want, as I have to be sensibly troubled at it; and though I know very well my discretion is very justly called in question by my best friends, yet I cannot but a little wonder that those who do so often advise me to apply myself to business, should be so unwilling I should appear upon so considerable stage of it as the House of Commons. Were I capable of recovering my credit so far as you should think me fit to sit there, I do not think it were a matter of any difficulty to retrieve this whole matter. God send the latter be not easier than the former! I crave you a thousand pardons for telling you my mind so freely, but I must out, or I must burst; and it being the only act of your life to me that has not savoured of the most perfect and most tender kindness, it were a breach of mine to you not to take notice of it, but that is with all the submission, all the deference and all the most perfect kindness that one man is capable of having for another, none of which shall ever fail you from your most really affect. obliged brother and servant,

“ H. SAVILE.”

Five months after this letter was written, Lord Halifax lost his wife. She died very suddenly, and was buried on the 30th of December at Thornhill, the family burying-place of the Saviles. Her younger sister, Lady Penelope, had died, in all probability, a year or two before, since the last time she is mentioned by Henry Savile is in September 1667. There is no notice of her death in the registers of Brington or Penshurst, nor yet at Bidborough, and those at Wellow, the parish church at Rufford, do not go back so far as the seventeenth century. All we know is that she died unmarried, somewhere about this time. So Lady Sunderland found herself bereft of both her daughters, in the flower of their youth, and once more realized to her cost the truth of the poet's words—

“The common fate of all things rare,
How small a part of time they share
Who are so wondrous sweet and fair.”

The four young children whom Lady Halifax had left, now became the great object of their father and grandmother's solicitude. Lady Sunderland, in her letters, frequently alludes to “dear Nan,” and her brothers, “the little rogues,” as she fondly calls them, whose future occupied the foremost place in Lord Halifax's thoughts, and for whose welfare and education he was so full of anxiety. And it was for little Nan that, soon after her mother's death, he wrote the famous *Advice to a Daughter*, while she was still a child at her games—“playing, full of innocence.” This treatise, which ran rapidly through sixteen editions, and was translated into French and Italian, is marked with all the Great Trimmer's prudence and philosophy. No one had a keener or more discerning eye for human frailties and follies. No one, it must be said, looked on them with a kindlier heart. He moralizes over women's characters and habits, after his favourite fashion, and tempers maxims of exalted piety with a curious mixture of worldly wisdom. But all through, he bears in mind the image of the women he has loved, of the noble and heroic mother who had watched over his early years, of the bright young wife who had been so cruelly snatched from him in her prime, of Sacharissa herself, fair

and good and wise. To them he owes it that his beloved child shall be trained up in all things that are lovely and of good report, and become in her turn a model of perfection and excellence. And he concludes in a passage worthy of the essayists of the *Spectator* or the *Tatler*—

“ May you, my Dear Child, be blessed with a husband and with children that may inherit your virtues, that you may shine in the world by a true light, and silence envy by deserving to be esteemed. May you so raise your character that you may help to make the next age a better thing, and leave posterity in your debt, for the advantage it shall receive by your example. Let me conjure you, my Dearest, to comply with this kind ambition of a father, whose thoughts are so engaged in your behalf, that he reckoneth your happiness to be the greatest part of his own.”

CHAPTER XVIII

1670—1680

Algernon Sidney in Exile—His Return to England—Death of Lord Leicester—Quarrels of the Sidney Brothers—William Penn—Portraits of Algernon Sidney.

AFTER the glimpses of Lady Sunderland at Rufford, which Henry Savile's letters give us, we lose sight of her again for the next twelve years. All we have is an occasional mention of her name, and here and there an allusion to her letters, which shows that her pen was as active as ever. Her home during these years was probably either at Boundes or in London, but she may well have spent part of this period of her life at Penshurst, with her aged father.

In 1668, her brother Robert, generally known as Robin Sidney, had died. He was the third of Lord Leicester's sons, and, like his younger brother, Henry, was a remarkably handsome man. Before the Civil War broke out, his father procured him a commission in the service of the States-General, and in 1648 he rose to the rank of Colonel in the Dutch army. During Charles II.'s exile, Robert Sidney was often with the King, and shared too many of his tastes. The Duke of Monmouth's mother, a Welsh girl named Lucy Walters, was for many years his mistress, and although Charles II. publicly recognized Monmouth as his son, it was thought by many that Colonel Sidney was in reality the Duke's father. Certainly his appearance was more that of a Sidney than a Stuart, and in height, complexion, and even in the warts that marked his face, he is said to have borne a close resemblance to Robert Sidney.

In 1665, when war was declared with Holland, Robert Sidney came to England, and spent a good deal of time at Court, but he did not manage to retain the royal favour, and considered himself badly used by his old comrade in exile.

In 1670, Lady Diana, the only one of Lord Leicester's daughters who never married, also died, and the old man was left widowed and solitary. Henry Sidney, it is true, still made Penshurst his home, and was frequently there after his disgrace at Court. But all these years his brother Algernon was an exile and wanderer on foreign shores. He left Italy in 1663, and after spending some time in Switzerland with Ludlow and his other companions in exile, he visited Brussels, where he had his portrait painted by Van Egmond, and sent the picture to Penshurst at Lord Leicester's request. It was of this portrait, which is still at Penshurst, that he wrote to his father—

“I could not send your lordship a thing of less value than my own, but since Sir John Temple says your lordship would have it, I will send it.”

He had, while in Rome, been inquiring of a friend in Frankfort after a picture of his great-uncle, Sir Philip Sidney, which he had discovered there, and endeavoured to secure for his father. And he begged to be told if he could procure anything in the way of pictures or statues, marble tables or mosaic work, which might be an ornament to Lord Leicester's new buildings at Penshurst. Another time he is engaged in enquiring after books which he thinks will please his father.

But although he did not forget his aged parent, and found consolations during his exile in the beauties of the Roman Campagna, and the kindness which he met with on his travels, he was still haunted by a bitter sense of his wrongs, and wrote home in the same melancholy strain—

“I cannot but rejoice a little to find that when I wander as a vagabond through the world, forsaken of my friends, poore, and knowne only to be a broken limb of a shipwrecked faction, I yet finde humanity and civility from those who are in the height of fortune and reputation. But I doe also well knowe that I am in a strange land, how farre these civilities doe extend, and that they are too aery to feed and cloathe a

man. I cannot soe unite my thoughts into one object, as absolutely to forbid the memory of such things as these are to enter into them. But I goe as far as I can, and smile. I cannot forget what is passed, nor be absolutely insensible of what is present. I defend myself reasonably well from increasing or anticipating evils by foresight. The power of foreseeing is a happy quality to those who prosper, and can ever propose to themselves something of greater felicity than they enjoy, but a most desperate mischief unto them who, by foreseeing, can discover nothing that is not worse than the evils they doe already feele. He that is naked, alone, and without help in the open sea, is lesse unhappy in the night, when he may hope the land is neare, than in the day, when he sees it is not, and that there is no possibility of safety. Perhaps sharp-sighted brains might, in a condition like mine, finde more occasion of trouble than I doe. I finde stupidity an advantage ; nature hath given me a large proportion of it, and I did artificially increase it to that degree, that if I were not awakened by the bitter sense of somme mischiefes that the Lady Strangford hath brought upon me (which Sir John Temple ever made me hope he would remove) I should rest well enough at ease, in a dull indolence, and never trouble myself with examining where I should have bread for three months. This may shewe your lordship into what state nature and fortune hath brought me that received life from you. I have not much to complaine of, unlesse in that one point I mentioned, less to desire, and least of all to be pleased with."

One of his chief causes of complaint was the vindictive hatred with which he found himself pursued by his enemies at home. Wherever he went abroad, their revenge followed him. His schemes of raising a body of troops to serve under the Emperor, in Hungary, was thwarted by the English Government, and he narrowly escaped assassination at Augsburg. Upon this, he went to Paris, where he entered into negotiation with the French Government, and at one time planned an insurrection against Charles II. But the scheme fell through, and he retired to Nérac in the south of France, where he lived in seclusion for some years, and devoted himself to his political writings. He speaks of himself as under-

going a kind of half burial preparatory to an entire one, and flatters himself that his enemies at Whitehall, instead of speaking of him as a very unruly-headed man, would believe him to be so dull and lazy as to be fit for nothing, or better still, would forget his existence altogether. When that desirable end had come to pass, he should think it a seasonable time to return home, and may hope to be allowed to live quietly in England. But the active opposition into which the animosity of Charles II.'s Government had thrown him, made this impossible, although he yearned more than ever for the old home, and his greatest wish on earth was to be allowed to see Penshurst once more.

At length, in the autumn of 1676, his father, whose health had been long declining, began to fail rapidly. Then the memory of his long-absent son came back again to his mind, and he longed to see him once more before he died. It was to his daughter Dorothy's son and to her son-in-law's brother, Henry Savile, that he owed the fulfilment of his dying wish. She herself was very anxious for her brother's return, and was glad to avail herself of the high position her son now held at the Court of Charles II. In 1671, Lord Sunderland had been sent on a special embassy to Madrid. In the following year he was appointed Ambassador to the Court of Versailles, and acted as one of the plenipotentiaries who met at Cologne to treat of a general peace. "I took leave," writes Evelyn in his *Memoirs* in 1672, "of my Lady Sunderland, who was going to Paris to my Lord, now Ambassador there. She made me stay to dinner at Leicester House, and after dinner she sent for Richardson, the fire-eater. . . . He devoured brimstone on glowing coales before us, chewing and swallowing them; he melted a beer-glass, and ate it quite up. He also tooke up a thick piece of iron, such as laundresses use to put in their smoothing-boxes, when it was fiery hot, held it betweene his teeth, then in his hand, and threw it about like a stone, but this, I observ'd, he car'd not to hold very long. Then he stood on a small pot, and bending his body, tooke a glowing iron with his mouth, from betweene his feete, without touching the pot or ground with his hands; with divers other prodigious feates."

At Paris the new ambassador found his old friend Henry Savile, who, having recovered the royal favour, had been sent on a special mission to Louis XIV. There had for some time past been a coolness between him and Sunderland, and Henry Savile was glad of the opportunity of recovering his lordship's good graces. "I need not tell your lordship," he wrote to Lord Arlington, "how willing I am to pay all manner of obedience to the first of your commands as touching my Lord of Sunderland, it being one of the most agreeable circumstances of my voyage that I hope for an opportunity of returning to his friendship, it having all my life been one of the greatest pleasures of it, and the losse of his kindness one of the greatest troubles that ever happened to me, soe that for any misbehaviour or disrespect on my side your lordship need not doubt either my care or obedience." His object was happily attained, and he was able to write to Lord Halifax a fortnight later—

"My Lord Sunderland does grow every day kinder and kinder to me, and by the time I go hence I shall be able to brag to you that that part of my *méchante affaire* is wholly over ; and I have reason to think I had made a further step in that matter, if some people in England had not been more malicious than they need, and friends there wiser than they are here ; however I comfort myself that my behaviour has been approved of here, and therefore I hope will not be blamed at home. The next week Mr. Godolphin and I set forth for our native country, hoping by that time the hurry of Newmarket will be over."

We are left in ignorance what the precise nature of this last scrape may have been, but in another letter from Paris, the following February, Harry Savile alludes again to this *méchante affaire*, and observes to Halifax—

"To trouble you at last with my own matters, it is no small comfort to me that, having done a very ugly action, I can be so sensible of it, that the result of such thoughts as came from a very guilty melancholy, can be thought too rigorous by such as have weighed all the circumstances of my mis-demeanor, with as great impartiality as concern and

kindness. I resolve to stick so close to a perfect obedience to so excellent friends, that I will make no resolutions so unalterable but that they shall easily yield to any dictates of yours and Sir W. Coventry. . . . If I am undone for ever, there is no remedy ; or if the remedies are to be slow, to consist in fawning, creeping and serving on, in offices troublesome and servile enough in themselves, however gilded by the fancies of men, I had rather be in a retirement where my hours are all my own, and of which, if I give no other account, it is something that neither myself nor my friends shall be ashamed of them."

He had lately been appointed "Groom of the Chamber" to the King, an appointment which he did not find particularly agreeable. He was, as he says, tired of Court, and wrote to Lord Arlington from Paris, that if a beggar might choose, he would like to be employed abroad, failing which he was determined to sell his place in the Duke of York's household and go back to sea. After informing Halifax of these intentions he continues—

"Though my paper is at an end, you must suffer so much of another sheet as to let you know I have received a letter from Madrid, from Sidney Godolphin, in which he condoles with me for my recent misfortune about the book, of which my Lord Sunderland has been informed from his mother, with this additional circumstance, that my Lady North complained of it to the Duke ; surely if that were true, you would not have forgot to let me know it. I should be glad if you would inform me concerning that point, which is at Madrid thought so very barbarous, that her friends there do condemn her rigour as much as my folly. It were unmerciful to trouble you at present with any more, this being already what is more suitable to my leisure than yours, and as for compliments, what can I say but, *Quid tibi retribuam Domine.*

"H. S."

This passage, it will be noticed, contains one of the few allusions to Dorothy, Lady Sunderland, which we find during this period, and is interesting as showing how well her letters

kept her son informed of the news and Court gossip at home. Unfortunately not a single letter to Lord Sunderland from his mother has been preserved, and the fragments of her correspondence with others, which remain, belong to a later period of her life.

Savile himself was unable to accomplish his intention of selling his place at Court, and during the next few years his time was divided between Whitehall and Paris, where he was frequently sent on missions to Louis XIV., until in March 1679 he was appointed permanent Minister at the French Court. No post could have been more to his taste, he was thoroughly at home in France, and told his brother that, in his opinion, Paris was the wholesomest and noblest place under the sun. His ready tact and quick perception made him an admirable diplomat, and the zeal and ability which he showed in this capacity won golden opinions even from those who were opposed to him. "Monsieur Savile" was said to be the most impertinent envoy at Versailles, and Halifax smiled when he heard the town gossips confidently affirm that, on one occasion, the Grand Monarque had himself boxed Harry Savile's ears.

It was to him that Algernon Sidney applied for the necessary permission to go to England and see his aged father, in the autumn of 1676. Charles II. still looked upon him with suspicion, and dreaded the influence of his talents and character. "Le roi me dit encore," wrote the French ambassador Colbert, "qu'il ne se souciait pas que le dit Sidney demeurait en Paris, en Languedoc, en tel lieu qu'il lui plairait, pourvu qu'il ne revient pas en Angleterre, où, dit il, ses pernicieux sentiments, soutenus d'autant d'esprit et de courage qu'il en a, pourraient beaucoup nuire." And a few weeks later the King added that he should be best pleased to see him remain in Languedoc, since the further he was from England the better! But now Sidney's request was supported by the French Court, and by his nephew, Lord Sunderland, who had been made Privy Councillor on his return to England in 1674. The great influence which this nobleman had acquired at Court, at length overcame Charles' reluctance, and through his intervention the required passport was

finally obtained. It was Henry Savile who sent the good news to Algernon, through his sister Dorothy's hands. She herself had used all her influence with her son to obtain the necessary permission from the King, and Algernon, in writing to Savile in November to beg for his help at Court, desired him to forward his answer to him through Lady Sunderland. The longed-for message reached the exile at Christmas, 1676. A delay had occurred owing to Henry Savile's illness, and Sidney had gone back to his retreat at Nérac in Gascony, and had almost given up hopes of ever seeing England again, when he received the welcome letter. He wrote at once to express his gratitude to Savile in the following reply, which originally appeared among his published letters with a wrong date, that of 1682. This puzzled many writers, but the letter was clearly written in 1676. This is proved by the mention of Monsieur du Moulins, the tutor of Lord Halifax's young son, who was then in France, as we learn from his uncle's letters to his brother.

"NÉRAC, Dec. 18, —82.

"I received yesterday in one and the same packet three letters from you, of which one had passed through Paris whilst I was there, and that would have spared me a journey of four hundred leagues if I had then received it. This would have been a convenience unto me, but any obligation unto you is the same, and I so far acknowledge it to be the greater that I have in a long time received from any man, as not to value the leave you have obtained for me to return into my country after so long an absence, at a lower rate than the *saving of my life*. You having proceeded thus far, I will without any scruple put myself entirely upon the King's word; and desire you only to obtain a Pass to signify it, and that his Majesty is pleased to send for me, so as the officers of the ports or other places may not stop me, as they will be apt to do as soon as they know my name, if I have not that for my protection. You took that which passed between you and me so rightly that I have nothing to add unto it. I have no other business than that which solely concerns my person and family. I desire not to be a day

in England unknown to the King, or his Ministers, and will lose no time in waiting upon the Secretary, as soon as I can after my arrival. I think it no ways reasonable that I should stay in England if the King do not see I may do it without any shadow or possibility of prejudice unto him, and unless I can satisfy him in that point, I desire no more than to return on this side after the three months, where I intend to finish my days, without thinking any more of living in England. You see my thoughts simply exposed; I beseech you to accomplish the work you have so well begun. Send your answer to Monsieur du Moulins, and believe no man in the world can be more obliged to you than
“Your most humble and obedient Servant.”

So Algernon Sidney came back to England after his eighteen years' absence, and once more saw his old father, and his beloved home. The powerful friends he now possessed at Court had no difficulty in obtaining an extension of the original three months which had been allowed him, and he remained undisturbed at Penshurst until the following November, when his father died, at the age of eighty-two. By his will Lord Leicester left him a legacy of five thousand one hundred pounds, while all the rest of his personal property was bequeathed to his son Henry, together with a manor in Warwickshire, which he had inherited from the Dudleys, and a charge of twenty-five thousand pounds on his estates in Leicester Fields. The old Earl also left a hundred pounds to be spent in two mourning rings as a special token of affection for his children, Dorothy, Countess Dowager of Sunderland, and Lady Lucy Pelham, the only two of his nine daughters whom circumstances had not estranged, or death divided from him.

Henry Sidney, Sir John Pelham, and Lord Sunderland were the executors of Lord Leicester's will, and soon found they had a troublesome task before them. Lord Lisle refused to pay the legacies bequeathed to his brothers, and was so indignant at the injustice which he held his father to have done him, that he quarrelled with all his family, and for many years refused to see his brothers and sisters. A long

and vexatious lawsuit was the result, and was only finally decided in favour of the younger brothers in 1680. Algernon Sidney was accordingly detained in England, and this being the case, his friends urged him to enter public life again. He was persuaded to stand for Parliament twice over. He became first of all a candidate at Guildford, early in 1679, and his election was only prevented by the arbitrary interference of the Court. One of his most prominent supporters on this occasion was his old friend, William Penn, who exerted himself actively on his behalf, and afterwards got up a petition on the ground of an unfair return.

“DEARE FRIEND”—he wrote, the day after the election, to the rejected candidate—“I hope the disappointment, so strange (140 poll men as we thought last night considered), does not move thee; thou, as thy friends, had a conscientious regard to England; and to be put aside, by such base ways, is really a suffering for righteousness; thou hast embarked thyself with them that seek and love and chuse the best things, and number is not weight with thee. I hope it is retrievable, for to me it looks not a fair and clear election. Forget not that soldiers were made free three weeks ago, in prospect of the choice, and by the way they went we may guess for Delmahoy’s sake, and thyself so often put by, a thing not refused to one of thy condition.

“Tis late, I am weary, and hope to see thee quickly. Farewell.

“Thy faithful friend,

“WILLIAM PENN.”

A petition was presented to Parliament and referred to a Committee, but eventually proceedings were abandoned by Sidney himself, who probably saw that it was hopeless to expect redress.

He did, however, consent, at the dissolution in the following July, to stand again for Bramber. William Penn, who had a place at Worminghurst in the neighbourhood, was very anxious to bring him forward for this borough; and the younger son of Algernon Sidney’s old friend, Sir John

Temple, was one of his most strenuous supporters. All seemed to be going well. "The borough," Penn wrote to him, "kindled at his name": when by the influence of the Court and of his brother-in-law, Sir John Pelham, Henry Sidney, who was at that time Ambassador at the Hague, was brought forward. Algernon declined to be put up against his brother, and at once retired. He stood, however, in August against Sir William Drake, for the town of Amersham in Buckinghamshire, which had formerly been represented by the poet Waller. The poll closed with a double return, and the final decision was referred to Parliament. Charles II. is said to have expressed satisfaction at Sidney's election, and observed to Lord Halifax that he believed he would prove an honest man, but when Parliament met in 1680, the House declared the election void. Algernon Sidney consoled himself with the reflection that both he himself and his principles were out of fashion, and that if returned to Parliament, he would have found himself equally disliked and suspected by both parties, and would have thereby become the most inconsiderable member of the House. But he watched the course of political events with keen interest, and remained on friendly terms with both Halifax and Sunderland, the two Ministers who were so nearly related to him, although he often disapproved of their course of action. And he kept up an active correspondence with Henry Savile, who in March 1679 had succeeded Sunderland at Paris, under the title of Envoy only, and whose timely help in enabling him to return to England he never forgot.

Meanwhile he took a deep interest in the schemes of his friend Penn, who was at that time pondering a plan of government for those states of America where he was soon to find his home. In that New World across the Atlantic there should be a state where peace and justice should reign, where the lives and liberties of the people should not be at the mercy of a tyrant's lust or ambition, but where all men should be free and happy—a state, in short, which should realize the fondest of Sidney's patriotic dreams. Together the two friends planned the system of government



ALGERNON SIDNEY.

From the picture by Sir Peter Lely.

which afterwards became part of the original Constitution of Pennsylvania. This interesting document was first drawn up at the Quaker's house at Worminghurst, and afterwards thoroughly revised by Algernon Sidney, and returned by him to Penn, who approved of his friend's alterations, and took it with him when he sailed for America in 1682.

After his father's death, Algernon Sidney was never at Penshurst again until the day after his execution, when his brothers brought his remains to be buried with his ancestors in the family vault. But the old house he loved so well still contains many relics of his presence. A lock of his reddish-brown hair is preserved, and a miniature of the great patriot as a baby boy in a white frock and a cap, besides several other portraits at different stages of his life. Among these is the well-known picture, in which he is represented leaning one arm upon a large volume bearing the single word *Libertas*. In the background we see the Tower, painted in after his death, and in the corner of the picture the axe which tells the tragic story of his end. The portrait is worthy of the man. All the Roman sternness, the lofty spirit and resolution of his character is there. We realize the generous enthusiasm which led him to live and die for the same sacred cause, and as we gaze on those noble features, overshadowed by the deep melancholy born of long years of disappointment and exile, those sad letters to his father come back again to our minds, and we remember the brave and simple words which he wrote in those foreign lands—

“ I finde so much by the management of things at home that it is impossible for me to be quiet one day, unless I would doe those things, the remembrance of which would never leave me one quiet or contented moment whilst I live. I knowe myself to be in a condition, that for all circumstances is as ill as outward things can make it ; this is my only consolation, that when I call to remembrance as exactly as I can, all my actions relating to our civill distempers, I cannot finde one that I can look upon as a breach of the rules of justice or honour ; this is my strength, and I thank God, by this I enjoy very serene thoughts. If I lose this, by vile and unworthy submissions, acknowledgement of errors, asking

of pardon, or the like, I shall from that moment be the miserablest man alive, and the scorn of all men. I walk in the light God hath given me. If it be dimme or uncertaine, I must bear the penalty of my errors ; I hope to doe it with patience, and that noe burden shall be very grievous to me, except sinne and shame. God keep me from those evills, and in all things else dispose of me according to His pleasure."

It is to Dorothy Sidney's affection for her brother, and to the care with which she kept his letters, that we owe the preservation of these noble lines.

CHAPTER XIX

1679

Lady Sunderland's Last Years—Her Character and Letters—Henry Sidney at the Hague—The Great Trimmer.

WE enter now on the last phase of Lady Sunderland's chequered and eventful life—a period strangely unlike all that has gone before, and yet every bit as interesting.

The brilliant scenes of by-gone years have all faded into the dim past. The great houses where her earlier days were spent, Penshurst and Althorp, Boundes and Rufford, are no longer her home, and only live as pleasant memories in her heart. Life, which had opened so joyously for young Lady Dorothy, seems to be closing in a grey and sober twilight. Time and fate have dealt hardly with her and have robbed her of all that was most precious in her eyes. One by one they have passed away, those bright forms she had known. The young husband of her first love, the child of bright promise whose presence had come like a ray of Heaven in her despair, the faithful friend whose loyal affection had brought her consolation for that sad past, the fair daughter in whose happiness she had seemed to live again: they are all dead and gone! And those who remain are sadly altered. Her sons are married. They have wives and families of their own, and occupy posts which demand all their energies and absorb all their thoughts. The old home at Penshurst is broken up, the members of that large family circle are all scattered and parted now. The sisters are dead, and the brothers have quarrelled and are wrangling over election matters, or engaged in disputing their father's last will. The suit in Chancery

between the new Lord Leicester and his brothers is occupying the big lawyers. The rivalry of Algernon and Henry Sidney in the Bramber election, the angry words on either side, and the estrangement which has followed, is the common talk of the town. And Dorothy, who hated quarrels and would gladly have loved them all, has to suffer for the wrongs of others, and to lament the unkindness which deprived her of her brothers' company. She bewails the sad fact that Lady Lucy Pelham is the one sister who is left her, and Henry Sidney the only brother whom she ever hopes to see again. But although her days are in the sear and yellow leaf, although she is left thus widowed and childless to lead a lonely old age, with little enough to make her cling to life, Sacharissa has not yet lost her freshness and power of enjoyment. She is still full of fire and spirit, keenly alive to all that is passing round her, and deeply interested in all that concerns her own friends. Her wit is as gay, her judgment as sound as ever. Her heart is as true as of old. When any of her friends are ill or in trouble, their first thought is to send for her. The heart-broken widow who can find no comfort turns to her by instinct, "in Mrs. Hervey's sad corner" no one else is so welcome. The girl on the eve of marriage comes to whisper all her hopes and fears in her ears; the disappointed statesman, the anxious mother, alike seek her counsel, her sympathy. She has time and thought to spare for all, and is always ready to listen, eager to help, always hopeful and consoling. And as she is the best of comforters, so she is the stoutest of partisans. If one of her friends is attacked, she throws herself passionately into the thick of the fight, and does battle for them gallantly. "Loving her friends as she does herself," she is apt, she owns, to get a little warm when they are slandered, but is just as ready to forgive and make peace again afterwards. Her little house near Whitehall is the favourite resort of young and old. Her letters are still in the greatest request. The poor old dolt in the corner, as she is pleased to call herself, knows all that is going on. The wisest statesmen in the land, the wits and the beauties alike come to ask her opinion, to hear what she has to say. She has kept that elixir of perpetual youth, the art of pleasing and

of being pleased. At sixty-two she is still the most delightful of companions, in Lady Mary Wortley Montague's words, ever agreeable, and therefore ever beloved.

And it is just at this period of her life that we know most about her, and become most intimately acquainted with her thoughts and feelings. For the twenty-four letters which are, alas! all that now remain of Lady Sunderland's vast correspondence, belong to these years. One letter was written in September 1679. All the others in the course of 1680. So that the interval of time they cover is but a small period out of her long life. As we read these bright and spirited letters, so full of human interest, so kind and good and true, it is melancholy to think how many others have perished, and how few and scanty are the fragments which are all that we have left us from "the most eloquent pen in England."

But the moment when they were written was a very critical one, and the writer's connection with the leading statesmen of the day gives the letters of Sacharissa peculiar interest. These form, in fact, an important contribution to the history of Charles II.'s reign. Not only were her son and son-in-law at the head of affairs, but the other leading statesmen of the day were all closely connected with her. Lord Essex, son of the brave Lord Capel who had died on the scaffold, had married one of her Percy cousins, Sir William Temple was one of her oldest friends. Henry Sidney and Henry Savile occupied the posts of envoys at the Hague and at Paris, and were at that moment the most important of our diplomatists, owing to the Prince of Orange's near relation to the English Royal family, and to the prestige enjoyed by Louis XIV. in the councils of Europe. At the same time the chief leaders of the Opposition were all of them connected with Lady Sunderland by marriage. Lord Russell had married her first husband's cousin, Lady Rachel Wriothesley, the eldest daughter of the Lord Treasurer Southampton, and Lady Russell's sister, Lady Northumberland, was now the wife of Ralph Montague. Finally, a still more important personage on the popular side, Lord Shaftesbury, had married her sister-in-law, Lady Margaret Spencer, as his third wife. This last-named statesman, whose abilities were as remarkable as his

utter want of principle, was the special object of Lady Sunderland's aversion. His determined opposition to moderate counsels, and his persistency in courting the popular vote, rendered him odious in her eyes. She looked upon him as a reckless and dangerous man, and was never so much pleased as when her brother Algernon quarrelled with him.

Thirteen of Lady Sunderland's letters were addressed to her brother Henry Sidney, the youngest of Lord Leicester's sons. Dorothy evidently looked upon him with something of the same tenderness that her mother had always felt for this child of her old age, and lavished more affection upon him than he deserved. For this "beau Sidney," as Grammont calls him, was the most unprincipled of men. Even in that degenerate age his morals excited scandal among his contemporaries. Swift denounces him as an idle, drunken, ignorant rake; and Burnet, who praises his sweet caressing manner and excellent nature, is forced to own that he was too fond of pleasure. After his intrigue with the Duchess of York had led to his disgrace at Court, many years had passed before he dared to show his face at Whitehall again. But in 1678 the influence of his nephew, Lord Sunderland, had restored him to favour, and the King had appointed him to the office of Master of the Robes. His fascinating manners and ready wit soon attracted Charles II.'s notice, and in June 1679 he succeeded Sidney Godolphin as Minister to Holland. This important post brought him into constant communication with the Prince of Orange, whose confidence he quickly won, and who, after his accession to the throne of England, created him Earl of Romney, and raised him to high offices of state. In this manner Sunderland accomplished one of his chief objects, and was able to keep up a secret correspondence through him with the Prince who was destined to play so important a part in English politics. Henry Sidney often boasted that he was invincible with women; and his correspondence with Anne Lady Sunderland, and other ladies, shows how large a use he made of the influence which he acquired over their hearts. He soon discovered the value of having so good a correspondent at home as his sister Sunderland, and it is to his appreciation of her "poor, silly letters"

when he was absent at the Hague, that we owe these lively effusions.

But fondly as Dorothy loved this brilliant and unprincipled brother, her other correspondent held a place still nearer to her heart. For this was Lord Halifax, the husband of her dead child. After his young wife's death he had sought distraction in public life, and had served during a short time as minister in Holland in 1672. The same year he was made a Privy Councillor, and became prominent as the leader of a small party who held aloof from both the Court and the popular party, and were known as Trimmers. But his frankness of speech and power of sarcasm did not suit the King, and in 1675 he left Court and returned to his old country life. He remained at Rufford until, after the fall of Danby in April 1679, he was suddenly summoned to become one of the King's newly-formed Council of Thirty. It was Sir William Temple who proposed his name to the King, and pointed out that not only Halifax's great abilities and high reputation made his presence desirable, but that if he was left out, his talent for ridicule might make him a very dangerous opponent. Charles gave his consent, and on the fifth of May, Henry Savile wrote from Paris to congratulate his brother on his return to public life. He had heard the news from Algernon Sidney, who, looking on Halifax as the most high-minded of the King's advisers, rejoiced in his recall. No one was more surprised at the summons he had received than Halifax himself.

"It seemeth," he wrote to Henry Savile, on the 10th of May, "you had the knowledge of my preferment before I could tell it you, so little did I apprehend myself to be likely to be re-admitted into the state of grace, as you might perceive by the style of my last, in which I assure you I did not dissemble with you. To undertake the being useful to my friends in the station I am in, would be a piece of arrogance very unfit for a councillor of a new edition; but if ever such a miracle should come to pass, as that from any degree of disfavour as I have lain under I should come to have any credit, no doubt but our *envoyé* in France might rely upon a friend at court."

He goes on to talk more seriously of the critical aspect which affairs have taken, and his remarks prove how clearly he realized the gravity of the situation. The country had been seized with a fit of blind fanaticism, and had fairly lost its head over the imaginary terror of the Popish Plot. The Lord Treasurer had been impeached, as guilty of treason, and sent to the Tower, and a vote had been passed declaring that the Duke of York's Popery encouraged the Papists in their wicked and murderous designs. The Duke of Monmouth was the popular favourite, and Shaftesbury boldly avowed his intention of placing him on the throne, to the exclusion of the King's brother. Well might Halifax say: "We are here every day upon high points; God send us once an end of them! Impeachments of Ministers, tryall of peers for their lives, discourses and votes too concerning the heir presumptive, are the only things our thoughts are employed about. And I, that have dreamt this half year of the silence and retirement of old Rufford, find myself engaged in an active and angry world, and must rather take my part in it with grief than avoid it with scandal. My Lord Sunderland is very kind, and I value his being so, to the degree I ought. I need not tell you how much you owe him, but remember, it is no small thing for men at Court to speak kindly of their friends when at a distance. I leave you to your triumph for your great wedding [the festivities that celebrated the marriage of Monsieur's daughter, Marie Louise, to the King of Spain], and that I may close with a pleasing line to you: I was told by a Frenchman "*que Monsieur Savile fait les affaires de son maître le plus habilement du monde.*"

For a time, however, all went smoothly. Halifax was received into the intimate councils of the ministers, and the country was practically governed by the three Lords, Sunderland, Essex, and Halifax, and Sir William Temple. "During all these transactions," wrote Temple, "the three Lords and I continued our constant meetings and consultations; and with so much union and so disinterested endeavours for the general good of his Majesty's service and the kingdom's, that I could not but say to them, at the end of one of our meetings, that we four were either the honestest men in

England, or the greatest knaves, for we all made one another at least believe that we were the honestest in the world."

And even Algernon Sidney, who looked on the Court with no friendly eye, wrote to Savile of the King's new ministers with approval.

"A friend of yours and mine," he adds, probably meaning Lord Sunderland, "is, as far as I understand, the author of all this ; and if he and two more [Halifax and Essex] can well agree amongst themselves, I believe they will have the management of almost all businesses, and may bring much honour to themselves, and good to our nation."

Unfortunately, this happy state of things was not to last long. In the following July Parliament was dissolved, and Halifax was advanced to the dignity of Earl.

"I keep the same name still," he wrote to his brother, "and intend your nephew shall take the barony, which is Eland : if any young woman that is a good match may be found that can be fool enough to like him the better for it, this piece of preferment hath something in it, else it is to me of very little moment, more than as it is a mark of the King's favour, which maketh everything valuable."

Savile in reply protested against the choice of Lord Eland's title, declaring that in taking a name which had formerly belonged to the elder branch of his family, Halifax had chosen the one of all his scutcheon that made the most unfortunate end, "not to be so foppish as to say the most sinfull one," and he cannot conceive how either the sound or the antiquity of that name can please him better than his own. On the whole, he is inclined to think that his niece, my Lady Anne, has the best part of the matter, and concludes by sending a thousand kind compliments to the Countess Halifax, my Lord Eland, my Lady Anne Savile, and not forgetting my little Lady Betty.

In 1674, Halifax had married another lady, remarkable for her beauty. This was Gertrude, daughter of his neighbour, William Pierpoint of Thoresby, and grand-daughter of Robert, first Earl of Kingston. By her he had an only child, born in 1675, the little Lady Betty, mentioned in her uncle's letter,

who afterwards became the mother of the great Lord Chesterfield. But this second marriage had not weakened the old tie which bound Halifax to Lady Sunderland. His relations with his mother-in-law remained as cordial as ever, and they kept up an active and regular correspondence throughout these troubled times. No son could have been dearer to her than he was ; and among all those who surrounded him, the great statesman knew well that he had not a truer and more understanding friend than Lady Sunderland. She appreciated his fine qualities, and honoured the independence and high principle, the genuine zeal for the public good which governed the whole course of his political career. And she could understand his thoughtful and speculative turn of mind, and listen with sympathy to those moralizings over the true meaning of life and the vanity of human things which exasperated his colleagues.

The most striking feature of the great statesman's character, and that which in a special degree fascinates the modern gaze, was the peculiar constitution of his mind, the capacity for seeing both sides of a question, which he himself has so admirably analysed in his *Character of a Trimmer*.

At a time when party hate and insolence ran dangerously high, and threatened the very existence of the state, Halifax brought the inestimable value of a calm and philosophic mind to the study of public affairs, and kept himself singularly free from the passions and prejudice which blinded his most able confederates. He looked serenely on the tumultuous scene, and never lost sight of the larger issues of the questions before him, or forgot the great principles that were at stake. By these laws he shaped his course, careless of the popular clamour and the angry voices of the surging crowd. Truth, injured, despised, and slandered Truth, was the object of his devotion, the mistress to whose services he was pledged.

"Our Trimmer," he says, in the concluding passage of his famous treatise, "adores the goddess Truth. Though in all ages she has been scurvily used, as well as those that worshipped her, 'tis of late become such a ruining virtue, that mankind seems to be agreed to commend and avoid it. She may be kept under and suppressed, but her dignity still

remains with her, even when she is in chains ; falsehood with all her impudence has not enough to speak ill of her before her face, such majesty she carries about her that her most prosperous enemies are fain to whisper their treason. All the power upon earth can never extinguish her. In all ages she has lived very retired indeed ; nay, sometimes so buried that only some few of the discerning part of mankind could have a glimpse of her. With all that, she has eternity in her ; she knows not how to die ; and from the darkest clouds that shade and cover her, she breaks from time to time with triumph for her friends and terror to her enemies."

The words recall that old picture painted by Sandro Botticelli, after a famous Greek model, where Truth is seen in the form of a lovely maiden who, forsaken of all men, turns silently from her persecutors, and lifts her hand to heaven in the calm certainty that there justice reigns and her mute appeal is heard.

It is true that this speculative and balancing turn of mind was not always an advantage in circumstances where prompt action would have been advisable. Halifax reasoned too long, and weighed conflicting causes too nicely, to act with decision.

"The native hue of resolution
Was sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

But this large-hearted toleration, this judicial faculty of recognizing merit on both sides of a question, made his influence of the utmost value on other occasions. When the liberties of the nation or the rights of the throne were threatened, when violent measures were moved by a blood-thirsty and triumphant majority, whether in the Lords or in the Commons, then the voice of Halifax was always heard on behalf of the innocent and oppressed. When the guileless Lord Stafford was brought to the scaffold by the infuriated Whigs, Halifax boldly recorded his vote against the criminal deed ; and when the Tories triumphed in their turn, and Lord Russell was condemned to die, it was Halifax again who dared to intercede for his old opponent. Because he rose above the fierce passions which blinded the eyes of

others, because he pleaded for justice and moderation before angry assemblies, he was called a Papist and Republican by turns, and hated and feared by Whig and Tory alike. "So difficult a thing it is," observed a scornful contemporary, "to wear both the court and the country livery."

"Lord Halifax has come to town," wrote Lady Russell to her husband in 1680, not without a touch of sarcasm. "The town says he is to hear all sides and then choose wisely." But three years later he earned her eternal and undying gratitude by his noble efforts to save her husband's life. Because he spoke his mind freely, and never stooped to learn the language of the courtier's honeyed phrases, he was unpopular at Court, until the critical hour came, and Charles II. found in him the staunchest and most trusted supporter of the crown. Because he could not always restrain his ready wit, and talked laughingly of grave subjects, he was reproached as an atheist, while as a matter of fact he was more sincerely religious than most of his contemporaries.

Sacharissa's eyes saw more clearly, and the judgment which she formed of her friend was a truer one. The statesman who dared to lift his voice in the cause of the innocent and oppressed, whatever their creed or party, and who risked his own life to save Stafford and Russell, Algernon Sidney and Monmouth, was just the man to win her love and admiration. We see from her letters to her brother, how keenly she resented the unjust attacks that were made upon him, and how her whole soul was stirred with generous indignation on behalf of this "perfect and constant good friend."

And his friendship remained her stay, his kindness her consolation in the declining years of her life, when scarcely another soul she could trust in was left to her. After Lord Halifax's death, many years later, this packet of letters which Lady Sunderland had written to him in the year 1680, were found carefully fastened together and endorsed with her name in his handwriting. On the death of his son William, the second Marquis of Halifax, they passed to his daughter and heiress, Lady Dorothy Savile, who became Countess of Burlington, and were preserved in the collection of her descendant, the Duke of Devonshire.

CHAPTER XX

1679—1680

Mr. Waller—The Court of Charles II.—Lord Sunderland Secretary of State—The Duchess of Portsmouth—Shaftesbury and Montague—Halifax retires to Rufford.

AMONG the most frequent visitors to Lady Sunderland's little house was her old admirer, the poet Waller. In spite of his frequent changes of front, he had received a friendly welcome at Court, and was a popular figure in London society. Public life had not lost its attractions for him. He sat in several Parliaments during this reign, and lived in a fine house in St. James's Street. His affections were more constant than his political principles, and he kept his old regard for the Sidneys to the last. He is often mentioned in Dorothy's letters, and was constantly dropping in, to chat with the ladies who met at her house, and bring her the latest news. On one occasion Lady Sunderland asked him laughingly when he intended to write some more verses for her, as he used to do in the old days at Penshurst. Upon which the poet, who was apparently just then in a bad humour, replied, "When you are as young again, Madam, and as handsome as you were then." But all the same Sacharissa had still a strange fascination for him, and "old Waller," as she calls him, was always re-appearing on the scene. He himself was still very good company, although he was old and grey, and never drank anything but water, which made Henry Savile say that "there was no one in the whole of England he would have to keep him company without drinking, excepting Ned Waller!"

But his poetry, strange to say, was very much out of fashion. Sir William Temple, who prided himself on being one of the old-fashioned school, in writing to Dorothy's eldest brother, Lord Leicester, deploras the fact, and regrets to learn that these beautiful lyrics are now held up to ridicule by the youth of the present day: "I cannot but bewail the transitoriness of fame, when I hear that Mr. Waller is turned to burlesque among the wits, while he is alive, which never happened to old poets till many years after their death! and though I never knew him enough to adore him, as many have done, and easily believe he may be, as your Lordship says, enough out of fashion, yet I am apt to think some of the old cut-work bands were as fine thread and as well wrought as any of our new point; and at least, that all the wit he and his company spent in heightening love and friendship was better employed than what is laid out so prodigally by the modern wits in the mockery of all sorts of religion and government."

In that sentiment Lady Sunderland and Sir William Temple and old Waller were all cordially agreed. The times were changed indeed since the days of Dorothy's youth. The old Cavaliers, who came to pay their respects to Charles I. and his Queen at Whitehall, marvelled at the change they found at this new Court. The love of pleasure and greed for money were the absorbing passions which governed monarch and courtiers alike. Titles and places alike were bought and sold, the King himself, his mistresses and chief ministers were in the pay of Louis XIV., and Barillon showered French gold freely both on the leading members of the Court party and of the Opposition. Together with this wide-spread venality, there was a general decay of morals. The standard of honour had sunk to a low pitch. To be a fine gentleman nowadays, Lady Sunderland remarks, you need only gamble and tell lies; to be a fine lady you have only to run away with your neighbour's husband. Vice and debauchery reigned supreme in high places. The grave Lord Leicester and his honourable lady would have recoiled in horror at the scenes which took place nightly in the palace where the Merry Monarch held his Court, where Secretaries of State sat at *ombre* or *basset* with the King's mistresses, and Louise de la Keroualle or Mrs.

Nelly received the homage of noblemen and princes, in the Queen's own presence, while the chief actor among them all, careless of dark plots and sinister rumours of breaking hearts and innocent blood shed in his name, cared only how he might best take his ease, eat, drink, and be merry, and shrugged his shoulders with a cynical smile at the fanaticism of his subjects. And foremost among the King's Councillors, high in favour with the reigning mistress, was Sacharissa's own son, Robert, Earl of Sunderland.

He had been recalled from Paris in the spring of the year to become Secretary of State, and had played his cards so well, that at the present moment he was held to occupy the foremost place both in the King's good graces and in the popular favour. Lady Sunderland's letters are naturally full of her son's name, although she owns with a sigh that it is but seldom she sees him. She follows every stage in his career with the deepest interest, hears with breathless anxiety the evil reports and malicious things which his enemies try to spread abroad, and rejoices above all to see him acting in concert with Halifax. But with all a mother's pride in his splendid position and brilliant talent, with all her eagerness to further his schemes and believe the best of him, it gave her a pang to see him paying assiduous court to the Duchess of Portsmouth, dining in her rooms, receiving her at Althorp, and never missing an opportunity of publicly showing his respect for this all-powerful favourite. It distressed her to hear of the reckless way in which he gambled away his fortune, and to be told that the thousands he lost at *basset* were "the common talk of the coffee-houses." And she was still more deeply grieved to note the unworthy intrigues in which his name was mixed up, and his base desertion of the most tried and trusted friends.

"Some things," she tells her brother Henry, "lie heavy at my heart." In March 1679, Lady Sunderland had a dangerous attack of ague, and Halifax, writing to his brother at Paris, says in a postscript: "My old Lady Sunderland hath been very ill, and is not yet out of danger."

Her illness was cured by repeated doses of the new medicine, "quinquina," or the Jesuits' powders, as they were

called, then first coming into fashion. Temple, in his *Essay on Health*, speaks of the new drug, and alludes to the suspicion with which it was at first regarded—a suspicion which Lady Sunderland herself seems to have shared at one time. But its credit, Temple informs us, was soon established by general adoption, and one of the first patients who owed his recovery to its use was Charles II. himself. In August he fell dangerously ill, and the greatest alarm was excited both at home and abroad. Henry Savile's letters reveal the consternation felt at the prospect of the anarchy which would be likely to follow on the King's death at this critical time. "The news of our master's illness," he wrote to Henry Sidney at the Hague, "hath so frightened me that I expect this day's letters with great impatience as well as with fear and trembling. Good God, what a change would such an accident make! The very thought of it frights me out of my wits. God bless you and deliver us all from that damnable curse."

It is to this illness, which excited a perfect panic in the city, that Lady Sunderland alludes in the first letter we have to Henry Sidney.

"September 2nd.

"Since you were so thankful for a poor silly letter, I'll tell you of one more. I writ to you as soon as my little brains were settled by hearing that the King was much mended, and, thanks be to God, does yet continue, but I have the less comfort in it because his fits were put off, like mine, by the Jesuits' powder, and it was as necessary to give it to him as to me, for he was with two fits weaker than I was with more. If all the trouble people have been in was out of kindness to him, never any King had so much, for it was to a distraction. I believe yet there is scarce anybody, beyond Temple Bar, that believes his distemper proceeded from anything but poison, though as little like it as if he had fallen from a horse. Everybody is very desirous to have him come to Court as soon as he is able; as yet he does not appear much inclined to it, yet one of our friends [Lord Sunderland], he that is constantly there, you do not doubt, is very well in favour of it,

and the other [Lord Halifax], who is much there, is so too. In my last, I told you of a fine affair of love and caressing ; now I am told, but by no Privy Councillor, that the Duchess of Richmond [Miss Stewart, formerly the mistress of Charles II.] had, notwithstanding the troubles of the time, complained to the King of the great injury How had done her, in bragging of her favours and letters, when she had never given him cause for either. The King appointed the Duke of Monmouth, my Lords Essex, Sunderland, and Halifax to examine this business ; this I am told, and I think they judge of the Lady's side ; then he is a fine gentleman if he lies ! If the Privy Councillors had not used their authority to keep the crowds out of the King's chamber, he had been smothered ; the bedchamber men could do nothing to hinder it. My niece, Martha, passed this way into Northamptonshire ; my sister has been very kind to them, and keeps the child. The two sisters I doubt are not very kind, nor the two brothers-in-law. I daresay, by what Montague has told me, Mr. Algernon has been a good while at Paris, and not gone to Holland."

Montague, whose name occurs so frequently in these letters, and in all contemporary records, was Ralph Montague, son of Lord Montague of Boughton, formerly Ambassador in France, and afterwards made Duke of Montague by Queen Anne. He had long courted, and had at length married, the young widow of the last Earl of Northumberland, Lady Elizabeth Wriothesley, half-sister to Rachel, Lady Russell, and cousin to the first Lord Sunderland, and lived with her for a time at Leicester House, while Montague House, now the British Museum, was building. Montague had been the chief instrument in the impeachment of the Lord Treasurer Danby, and was among the foremost partisans of Monmouth and Shaftesbury. His marriage had brought him into close connection with the Sidneys, and many of the most illustrious families in England, and his house was the meeting-place of all the wits and gossips of the day.

"Penn," continues Lady Sunderland, alluding to the Sussex election, which had been hotly contested between her brother-in-law, Sir John Pelham, and the popular candidate Sir John Fagg, "did what he could to help Fagg, and hinder

my brother Pelham, who had not one gentleman against him. My Lord Clifford does not stand, my Lord Burlington would not bear the charge. This town does infinitely abound in lies ; I believe there is a great one just now, that the Duke [James, Duke of York] came last night and went immediately to Windsor ! This would make news indeed for the next post. With much affection, I am your humble servant,

“D. S.

“Not so strange as true ; the Duke is come, as others will tell you, only with old Ned Villiers, Churchill, and young Legge ; how he was received I did not hear. I have seen nobody that knows anything. I believe nothing has surprised more a long time but his going.”

The news which Lady Sunderland had just taken for a great lie was true enough. The three lords, Sunderland, Essex, and Halifax, had been so much alarmed at the King's critical condition that they had sent to Brussels for the Duke of York, who had hurried over without a moment's delay and had gone straight to Windsor. According to Temple, who was not in the secret, the three lords thought the King's danger and their own equally great, since if Charles had died there would be nothing to hinder the ambitious designs of the Duke of Monmouth, and his supporter, Lord Shaftesbury, “who had threatened to have the heads of all the King's Ministers.” “For my part,” adds Temple, “though I was glad of any mortification that happened to the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Shaftesbury, whose designs had run the kingdom into such incurable divisions and distractions, at a time that our union was so necessary to the affairs of Christendom, yet I was spited to the heart at the carriage of my friends in this affair, not so much for their taking such a resolution without my knowledge and consent, as for keeping me ignorant after the Duke's coming over.”

The King recovered, and the Duke of York conducted himself with great discretion and prudence, but it was plain that the happy state of affairs which had for a short time existed between the four Councillors was at an end. Henry Sidney, coming over from the Hague two months later,

describes all his friends as "most horribly unsatisfied." . . . My Lord Halifax ill and out of humour, sometimes talking of retiring, but not resolved upon anything. Sir William Temple gone to Shene and refusing to attend any more Council meetings, or go into any company, and my Lord Essex talking of retiring. "This," he observes in a letter to the Prince of Orange, "is very different to what was four months ago. What will be the next change, God only knows!"

As for Lord Sunderland, he rails at every one alike, and his only care seems to be, to stand well both with the Prince of Orange and the Duchess of Portsmouth. The Lady at the end of the gallery, as his friends call her, has more power than ever. This French girl, with the baby face and laughing eyes, she it is who is the real monarch of the realm. There she reigns, in those sumptuous lodgings at the end of the long gallery at Whitehall, hung with the most costly Gobelin tapestry, and adorned with great vases and branches, and clocks of massive silver, and all that luxurious and expensive furniture which scandalized Evelyn's eyes. There the King and his gallants every morning attend her levée, pay her compliments, and laugh at her sallies, while her maids comb her hair, as she sits there "newly out of bed," in her loose morning robe. Even her maid, Mrs. Wall, has become a very important personage, and is cajoled and courted by princes of the blood. The Duke of Monmouth has actually gone so far as to offer her 500 guineas, which Mrs. Wall, to do her credit, has refused, although she loves him above all things. And Mr. Sidney himself finds it well to send her a letter of congratulation, upon her appointment to the post of Head Laundress to the Household, in the room of Mrs. Chiffinch.

On the other hand, Nell Gwynne, or Mrs. Nelly, as she was called at Court, had now assumed the part of the people's favourite, and entertained the Duke of Monmouth and his friends at supper in her rooms at Whitehall. Her coarse jokes and noisy fun amused the King, and her witty sayings had lately gone the round of the Court. One day Charles complained in her presence of want of money, upon which she told him, with a gay laugh, that she could get it for him to-morrow by inviting the Parliament to dine on a French

ragoût, Scotch collops, and a calf's head. The French ragoût was the Duchess of Portsmouth, Lauderdale, whose harsh rule had made him unpopular in Scotland, was the dish of Scotch collops, and Sunderland was ridiculed as a calf's head, because he was supposed to be in favour of a return to the policy of Charles I., the anniversary of whose execution was mockingly termed Calves' Head Day by the Whigs.

Henry Sidney's private affairs had brought him over to London. During his absence he had been elected member for Bramber, in spite of the opposition and active exertion of Penn, and his neighbour Mr. Goring, who had brought forward Sir Charles Woosley, "one of Oliver's friends." Algernon Sidney had also canvassed vigorously for the defeated candidate, a proceeding which was not calculated to improve the feud between the two brothers, especially when Henry Sidney's agent, his mother's old servant, Gilbert Spencer, told him that, owing to Mr. Algernon's promises and guineas on the one hand, and Mr. Goring's treats and drinkings on the other, the election had cost him a considerable sum. "It is not to be imagined," he adds, "what these fellows, their wives and children will devour in a day and night, and what extraordinary reckonings the taverns and alehouses make, who, being Burghers, are not to be disputed with, in that point. Sir John Pelham sent over half a buck, with which we heated brandy, and you would have laughed to see how pleased I seemed to be in kissing of old women, and drinking wine with handfulls of sugar, and great glasses of burnt brandy, three things much against the stomach, yet with a very good will, because to serve him I most honoured."

These heroic exertions of Mr. Gilbert Spencer's had been crowned with success, and the good burghers of Bramber were naturally eager to see their new member. Another cause which made Spencer wish for his master's presence was the suit still pending between him and Lord Leicester regarding his father's will. Before this trial came on, however, Henry Sidney was suddenly called to the Hague. He sailed on the 19th of November from London, after spending his last evening at my Lord Sunderland's house in Queen Street, where he discussed politics with my Lady, and also met her

mother-in-law, who had come to take leave of him. "My sister Sunderland," he notes, "spoke to me for a china cup."

The following January he heard from Gilbert Spencer that the vexatious law-suit in which he had been so long engaged was happily ended.

"MOST HONOURED SIR,—Yesterday was the fortunate day of your trial with my Lord of Leicester, which proved as well as we could wish, and in many circumstances better than we did hope for. In short, after a full hearing of their witnesses, having before heard me on your part, the Jury gave a verdict at the bar without stirring out of court, which is for the honour of your cause in its clearness, all the judges apprehending the truth of the thing immediately and were clearly for you in it. . . . My Lord Lisle was in court, but not Lord Leicester. Mr. Foulkes and I sent your brother Algernon a breviat and he sent it to one of his lawyers. I was glad he did not appear. One that was formerly a butler to the Earl of Leicester was a witness for him, but what he said seemed only to fling dirt in his Lord's face. There was a little gentlewoman, a governess and Miss, whose mark is out of her mouth, was there and said something to little purpose rather to serve than hurt you, as it was ordered; I know not how it was intended. I am so full of joy, that I hope you will give me pardon for the length of my letter. Mr. Guy tells me I shall have order to-morrow for £450 a quarter, which when I have secured, I mean to spend two or three quiet days at Penshurst [at his house Redleaf, on the edge of the park], and then to London again. Though your brother Algernon would not concern himself, but was long in churlish humour, I hear he laughed when he heard how the cause went. And I believe your brother Leicester will not have so good an opinion of his own law as he used to have, 'tis thought he will be in a great rage at the verdict. I am sure if he had had it, he would never have let you have a quiet day, nor a penny legacy; but now I hope he may be made wiser and you happier, whether he will or no." Three days later he adds: "Your friends here, and they are many, rejoice at your good success in this affair; not so my Lord of Leicester.

I hear he storms and swears like mad, calls me a hundred rogues, which I am glad to hear, because it is for discharging a good conscience and securing you. He is so hampered now that he knows not where to go, and in the country my poor wife writes that all are startled, some are glad, and some are afraid. Let them tremble still, whilst I, with a thousand more, rejoice at your prosperity."

The same week Lady Sunderland wrote to her brother Henry.

"Jan. 6th.

"You may see by my writing, that I am not so unreasonable as to expect you should write to me oftener than you do. When I hear Tom Pelham [her nephew] brag of your letters, I grumble a little in my mind. I will not congratulate you on your success in Westminster Hall; I have always declared I would not be glad, which way soever it did go; though now it were wise to make you some compliment, for I shall never see any other brother again, I believe.

"You must needs hear of the abominable disorders amongst us, calling all the women whores, and all the men rogues in the playhouses, throwing candles and links, calling my Lord Sunderland traitor, but in good company; the Duke, rascal; and all ended in—'God bless his Highness, the Duke of Monmouth. We will be for him against all the world.' I am told they may be fined a great deal, if they are prosecuted. Two of these are knights of shires, Sir Scroope How, and my Lord Wharton's eldest son; the only sufferer yet is Porter. They are ashamed, I hear, and afraid.

"I hope the four Councillors who left the King in so formal a way of ostentation will have no great ill effects. My Lord Radnor [who had succeeded Shaftesbury as Lord President of the Council] says he did not come in with them, and he will not go out with them. I cannot slight it, because many more people go against reason than with it."

These four Councillors were Lord Russell, Lord Cavendish, Sir Henry Capel (brother of Lord Essex), and Mr. Powle, who took this step to mark their indignation at the proroga-

tion of Parliament, which, after being summoned to meet in October, was prorogued by the King without the advice of his Council until the 26th of January, when its meeting was again deferred until the following November. Lord Essex had resigned office for the same reason, and Halifax, disgusted with the King's breach of faith, had refused to accept the post of Secretary of State, which had been pressed upon him, and took the first opportunity "to steal away to Rufford," as Lady Sunderland goes on to inform her brother. "The town says my Lord Halifax is retired too; he is at Rufford a month sooner than he intended, but I hope he will come again, though he does not stay. I am sure he had resolved to be at Rufford all this spring and summer, four or five months ago. I have met my Lady Hervey [Ralph Montague's sister] twice in Mrs. Hervey's sad corner, though she does not care to have her there, for she cannot forbear comedy; the last subject was her daughter Lacker thinking her husband handsome. She says, three heads and ten noses could not be uglier than he is. . . . The beauty of one of your sex will be quite spoilt if my Lord Grey does not hinder it. My Lord Shrewsbury has so great a blemish of one eye, that 'tis offensive to look upon it. My Lord Leicester is as unconcerned as if he had lost but a *crème* from his table. My Lord Lisle the contrary. He has seven or eight or a dozen at dinner with him every day. My Lady Hervey says, to hear him and you talk 'tis a wonder you should disagree in anything. As to the other brother [Algernon Sidney] she wonders nobody shoots him. The Duchess [of York's] coming puts everybody in abominable humour. My Lord Grey was so good-natured as not to carry his wife far from her beloved; he has gone into Sussex where the Duke of Monmouth is to hunt. The new Secretary [Sir Leoline Jenkins] you will hear of; I know not what he has given. All the town has made my son Treasurer [in Lord Essex's place], but the King, though there is no more probability of this than when you were here, neither has he the desire so much as I have that you should love me as well as you can, who do you, more than you care for.

"D. SUNDERLAND.

“I had a letter just now from Lord Halifax. I find he will not be soon here, but is far from making any meritorious cause of it.”

At the same moment Halifax was writing to his brother at Paris—

“Our world here is so over-run with the politics, the fools’ heads so heated, and the knaves so busy, that a wasp’s nest is a quieter place to sleep in than this town to live in, which maketh me so weary of it that you must not wonder if you hear that, notwithstanding my passion for London, that hath been very little inferior to yours for Paris, I go very early this spring into the country, where, besides other invitations, I shall have that of seeing my small works at Rufford, having yet only had the pleasure of disbursing for them. I confess I dream of the country, as men do of small beer when they are in a fever; and at this time poor old Rufford, with all its wrinkles, hath more charms for me than anything London can show me. How long Paris will keep you in love with it I do not know, but I am mistaken if at last Barroughby [a small estate in Nottinghamshire which Henry Savile had inherited] doth not get the better of it. My uncle Packington is lately dead, but whether you or your nephew [Lord Eland] will think fit at this distance to mourn for him, is left to your better judgments.

“I am forever yours.”

His next letter was written from Rufford, where he described himself as most thoroughly happy, “although the forest hath not on its best clothes at this time of the year,” but, whether it be the general disease of loving home, or whether he has been so long absent his own house seems to him a new thing, he finds himself every day “fitter for a coal fire and a country parlour.”

Harry Savile replied that he not only approved, but envied his brother’s retreat at Rufford more than all the places and dignities any Court upon earth could give, and after telling him of the poisoning cases which had

been filling all Paris with horror, ends his letters with the words—

“These are strange things to the calm thoughts of a happy man at Rufford. You that are in port, pity those that are in storms, and would never put to sea again, if once well on shore. This is so true, that my being most faithfully yours cannot be truer. Adieu.”

CHAPTER XXI

1680

Sunderland in Power—His Mother's Letters to Henry Sidney—The Leicester Trial—Lady Sunderland and Algernon Sidney.

MEANWHILE Lord Sunderland, although abandoned by his abler confederates, remained in power, and for a time managed public affairs in his own way. The whole country was in a ferment, petitions were daily got up both by the towns and the counties, praying the King to summon Parliament, and an outbreak was feared in the city. But the Prime Minister cared for none of these things, as long as he himself was "safe, rich, and great." Even his friend and apologist, Bishop Burnet, remarks: "He was a man of great expense, and in order to supporting himself, he went into the prevailing counsels at Court, and changed sides often, with little regard either to religion, or to the interests of his country." His position, for the moment, seemed secure, and he stood higher than ever in the King's favour, and in that of the Duchess of Portsmouth. Sidney Godolphin and Laurence Hyde, second son of Lord Clarendon and afterwards Earl of Rochester, who had succeeded Lord Essex at the Treasury, were his firm supporters, and with their help he kept the control of public affairs in his own hands. At the Hague, Henry Sidney had succeeded in outwitting the French Ambassador, and had defeated Louis XIV.'s project of a defensive alliance between France and the States. His success in this undertaking had won the greatest credit at home. The King commended his zeal warmly, his name

was toasted at public dinners, and congratulations poured in upon him from all sides.

His sister Dorothy hastened to rejoice with him in his good fortune. Her letter is dated January 23rd.

“A thousand kind thanks to dear Mr. Sidney for his letter, and his other words, which I sent to my Lord Halifax, who is still with Sir William Coventry in the country. Nobody can be more glad of the great good work upon the public account, and for the particular good to you, than I am.

“I have spent two days of this week already with poor Mrs. Hervey; she is not willing to have anybody else come to her. Once my Lady Hervey broke in upon her, but to me she gave leave; she is as much afflicted as is possible. She will not endure to hear her husband's will, nor of it, but Sir John Cook has told her she must, it could not be executed from others. I hear she has given a great deal in present to his relations, which was well done, for she will have ten times more than she will know what to do with.

“I suppose now the most factious people will not say the Dutch have agreed with France and broke with us. Within these two days Tom Pelham and Montague [her niece's husband] believed it, so as to make me angry. They, instead of improving by Sir William Jones [Pelham's father-in-law, formerly Attorney-General], will be quite spoiled. There is not a lie out of any mutinous shop in town but they believe it. . . . I am very sorry I shall not see you as soon as I did hope, but your stay will be to so good purpose, that it will be a consolation to your friends that want you. Yesterday the rich Thynne brought a petition to the King, he said from the County of Wiltshire. The King asked him if it came from the Sessions? No. If from the Grand Jury? No. Then His Majesty told him he did not take it from the county. There was Sir Walter St. John and Sir Robert Hungerford with him; but the petition fell flat to what was expected. There are now but two days for them to come. What will be done at the meeting of Parliament, I know not.

“I am Yours, with a true affection,

“D. S.”

The meeting of Parliament had been originally fixed for the 26th of January, and the news of its further prorogation had apparently not yet reached Lady Sunderland. On the same day her daughter-in-law was also writing to Mr. Sidney, and confiding her hopes and fears to her friend and ally.

“I hope you will receive an everlasting reward for all the troubles and pains you take in a good cause, and that it will succeed to your heart’s desire. I cannot but lament at the signs I see of your being kept longer from this poor closet, where I wish you often in a day, and hope I am not mistaken in thinking my mind and yours agree in that particular.

“We are every day between hopes and fears, but the last commonly crown the day. The King, God be praised, is better than ever I have seen him since his sickness. He dined here yesterday and was in the best humour possible. This day the Common Council sits upon the Petition; what the event will be I know not, but you’ll hear, I suppose, from his honour. We hope well. Several counties in England have rejected and declared against it as a tumultuous thing. Nay, in Somersetshire they have gone so far as to set forth remonstrances against such seditious proceedings. But here is the business that crowns the day. Just now I have an account of what the Common Council has done, namely that the Petition was rejected by fifteen voices, though my Lord Mayor played the devil. ’Tis the best news we could hope for. If the City be quiet, I think there is no great danger, and I hope in God that time will bring people to their wits again. I assure you we are all very pert upon this unexpected good success. I pray God we may make a good use of all these reprieves. It may seem very impertinent my writing all this, which you will certainly hear from better hands, and more impertinent my commenting upon it, but I love to impart my thoughts to my friends, and you, I hope, will ever be in the first rank.”

And three weeks later she wrote in the highest spirits—

“I can now assure you to the great joy of my heart, that our friend [Sunderland] is most entirely out of a possibility of being wheedled any more, and he and the two Com-

missioners [Hyde and Godolphin] have all the hopes possible. The King is the rightest we can wish him to be, and will espouse all you or any honest man can desire for the good of Christendom, which is ruined if this alliance does not go on. You know I am not very apt to hope ; desponding is my temper ; but surely I was never so pert these four years."

On the 30th January the Countess Dowager sent another letter to her brother.

"I write without expecting or desiring a return from a man of your importance at this time, but in some way I hope to hear soon what effect our prorogation has where you are. I hope they did no more expect the sitting of the Parliament than we did here, and then it will make no change, which every good body does wish, now 'tis so well. Those who have pretended most to desire what you have so happily succeeded in, are sorry for it, because 'tis for the good of the King and kingdom and done without them.

"Though I am no great courtier, I have almost fallen out with some of their unseasonable factiousness and particular maliciousness to my son ; with these Tom Pelham is, but you shall never hear it. He expects too much from you, and is as interested a young man as any is, or else he would not be such a slave to his father-in-law's humours. His sisters and his brother-in-law [Edward Montague] tell me 'tis insufferable. I have made no complaint of him, but I have been a little sharp with him myself, and 'tis very well passed over. They are abominably fooled by their neighbours.

"My Lord Halifax is gone to Rufford, liking the country air very well. My Lady says, she wishes he would send for them, and not come for so short a time ; as to that, he has said a good while he would go. Poor Mrs. Hervey does not mend her humour at all, she is wilful to such a degree as nobody ever was. The town says that the Countess de Soissons has been here, and gone upon the French Ambassador telling her the King's declaration that if any accused for poisoning in France did come hither, he would send them to the King of France. That is true, but I know not if her having been here is so. I heard it but last night, and have seen nobody since."

This was Olympia de' Mancini, niece of Cardinal Mazarin, who had fled from Paris on suspicion of being concerned in the poisoning cases which, Henry Savile writes, were making so much noise. Madame de Sevigné describes her sudden disappearance from a supper-party at her own house. She was playing at *basset* with her friends, when her brother-in-law, M. de Bouillon, came in and told her that a warrant for her arrest had been issued, and she must fly that night, if she did not wish to be lodged at the Bastille. She left the room without a word. Supper was served, but Madame la Comtesse never returned, and the astonished guests went their way, greatly perturbed in mind. That night the Countess left Paris in a coach driven by eight horses, taking with her all the gold and jewels she could conceal, and by the next day she was safe beyond the frontier. Ultimately she took refuge in Spain, and afterwards at Brussels, but never dared to show her face in France again.

Her elder sister, Hortense, Duchesse de Mazarin, whose quarrels with her husband and strange adventures are so often mentioned in Madame de Sevigné's Letters, was living in rooms at St. James's Palace, and received a pension from Charles II., in virtue of her relationship to the Duke of York's wife, Marie d'Este. This lady was the Madame Mazarine so often mentioned by Lady Sunderland and her contemporaries, at whose house the young men of fashion met to gamble, and whose own passion for play reduced her from being the greatest heiress in Europe to the verge of bankruptcy. Her Roman style of beauty and full-blown charms made a deep impression on the King, who often declared her to be the finest woman he had ever seen. For a time she rivalled the Duchess of Portsmouth in his affections, and always retained an important position at Court. Evelyn mentions her in his famous description of Whitehall a week before Charles II.'s death. "I can never forget the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness, and, as it were, total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening), which this day se'nnight I was witness of; the King sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarin, a French boy singing love songs in that glorious

gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers, and other dissolute persons, were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least £2000 in gold before them. Six days after, was all in the dust!"¹

"The Duke of Monmouth has so little employment in state affairs, that he has been at leisure to send two fine ladies out of town. My Lord Grey has carried his wife into Northumberland, and my Lady Wentworth's ill eyes did find cause, as she thought, to carry her daughter [Lady Harriet Wentworth, supposed to be the Duke's mistress] into the country, in so much haste, that it makes a great noise, and was done sure in some great passion. My Lord Grey was long in believing the Duke of Monmouth an unfaithful friend to him. He gave her but one night's time to take leave, pack up, and be gone. Some say he is gone to improve his interests in the north.

"In Kent they had put my son Smith into your jury; he would have got out of it, but Spencer did it; he would not have been in it; he would not have been in for £2000. They that put him in did not know that he had any relation to you.

"The news of the Duke's coming, by the declaration the King has put into the Gazette, is thought a little extraordinary by some. I wish you were here with all my heart, for your own sake; and because I believe I shall never see any other brother again, the more charity it is in you to be a little kind to

"Yours most affectionately,

"D. S."

The Duke of York had been suddenly sent for by the King from Scotland, where he had made himself very popular by his wise and cautious government, and on his arrival in town he was received with much affection by the King, and bonfires and shouts of joy by the fickle citizens. The royal brothers were on the best terms, and Sunderland, in spite of his well-known opposition to James, seemed to be in high favour with both princes.

"The King and Duke are as right as is possible," wrote

¹ *Diary*, vol. i. p. 154.

his wife to Henry Sidney, "and we are less splenetick than we have been this many a day. God continue it! And what is more hopeful, the Duchess of Portsmouth does not meddle in this affair, and will be governed well enough, though she were more a jade than she is, which I think she can hardly be."

On the 19th of February the Countess Dowager wrote again to Sidney.

"Your kind letter does so delight me, I would fain say something that would be the portrait of my heart, but I am so dull. Though my Lord Halifax has sent for his family, I hope he will come up himself, before everybody disperses. He can be without them here, but not very well there, because company comes to him. . . . For our friends at Court, my Lord Sunderland is as well as anybody; how long, God knows! As long as it does, I must tell you nobody has a truer friend at Court than you have of him. Hyde and Godolphin, his supporters, are never from him, with her at Little Ombre [the Duchess of Portsmouth]. The players have been disturbed again by drunken people's jokes. They called my Lord Arran a rogue; and one Fitzpatrick pointed at Mr. Thynne and called him that petitioning fool, and swore a hundred oaths; he said that he deserved £20,000 a year, but that fool deserved nothing.

"My Lady Scroope writes to me, that Mr. Savile is sometime a very impertinent minister. He is more than ever with her, in what he writ hitherto. She is in as ill hands as can be for her. They are treacherous creatures! I wish a good speedy end of your embassy, and that you were a simple gentleman in my chamber again. My Lady Lisle has another boy; the two grandfathers and the Duchess of Albermarle did christen it. Our brother [Lord Leicester] made her Grace stay above two hours for him, and she had not many more to stay in town. I am yours, with a very true affection,

"D. S."

Lady Scroope, the widow of Sir Adrian Scroope and daughter of Sir Robert Carr, of Sleaford in Lincolnshire, was

a great character in her day, and famous for making sharp speeches and doing startling things. Evelyn speaks of her in his Diary as my Lady Scroope, the great witte, and Henry Savile, who lived next door to her in Paris, found her a very amusing neighbour. His intimacy with her at one time seemed likely to damage his official reputation. Henry Sidney wrote home that he heard Mr. Savile told everything that happened to a woman, and Halifax warned his brother to be more cautious in his language about her. "I must now give you a friendly advertisement," he wrote, "and though you may think it a little thing, you must not laugh at me. I hear by accident, that you write into England with some freedom of a lady you converse with, and you are so happy in your writing talent, that things are repeated and whispered for secrets to so many, that they will cease to be so at last. But you will remember that the more we deserve jests, the less we bear them, and the more they are commended, so much more they are resented."

Her whims and oddities certainly afforded Henry Savile infinite amusement. She was a Roman Catholic, and had occasional fits of devotion, which Savile compares to his own zeal in attending at the Huguenot service at Charenton, a proceeding which afforded his friends at home much amusement. Halifax remarks that even *he* shines with the reflected light of these good deeds! "In the meantime my credit with the French Protestants I owe wholly to you, your zeal being so notorious that it throweth a lustre upon all your poor relations. It is enough to be akin to a man that goeth twice a day to Charenton! Sure when you come home, and find my Lady Scroope returned from hearing five masses in a morning at Notre Dame, you are both very merry; for I take it to be an equal laughing match between you about your respective devotions. Pray make her my compliments, and let this be one of them."

In return for which message, Lady Scroope sent him word, that she has been told in one of her sermons, that St. Benoit was heard to sing before his birth, and recommended this article of belief to him, "for it was very certain."

Her ladyship's good appetite was also a subject which provoked much laughter among her friends, and Anne, Lady Sunderland, tells Henry Savile how "my Lord went to wait upon her on her arrival in town, and found her at dinner on a leg of veal swimming in butter, which so turned his stomach, that she will scarce recover his good opinion."

Lady Sunderland's next letter is dated February 27.

"That you should be so good as to write, when you have a great deal of business and are not well, to the poor old dolt in the corner, is thankfully received.

"I have but little time and am not well. I must not forget my business, which is for Mr. Pierpoint [Lady Halifax's brother Gervase, who was about to marry her niece, Lucy Pelham]. He has in Holland some pictures, of considerable value he thinks them, and he says they are prohibited goods; most of them are Popish pictures, but not a crucifix amongst them. If you can, without inconvenience to yourself, get them over for him; you will do him a great favour, and I will let you know where they are as soon as I hear from you.

"There is no change of anything yet, that I hear, since his Royal Highness came. There never shall be any in me to you. I will ever love you and soon tell you so again."

In the same letter she alludes to an endeavour which had been made by herself and the Pelhams to end the suit in Chancery, and bring about a reconciliation between her brothers, by the mediation of Tom Pelham's father-in-law, the great lawyer, Sir William Jones.

"I hear our two loving brothers here are willing to refer their whole business to Sir William Jones. My Lord Sunderland and I say that our Ambassador will not refuse peace, who has ever been more inclined to it than either of them! God send it, I say."

But these well-meant efforts ended, as usual, in failure. Lord Leicester's conduct, on this occasion, so much offended Sir William Jones, that he declared he did not wonder my Lord would not believe him, for he would trust nobody. The suit in Chancery dragged on several months longer, until in the following July it ended, as might have been expected,

in favour of Algernon and Henry Sidney, who at length received the legacies named in their father's will.

Lady Sunderland herself, however, was more successful in her attempts to soothe her brother Algernon's wounded pride. Since his quarrel with Sir John Pelham and his son, over the Bramber election, he had refused to see any of his family. But when he fell ill, his sister's kind heart was filled with compassion, and her repeated messages of inquiry softened his stern mood.

"Our brother Algernon," she wrote on the 12th of March to Henry Sidney, "is very ill of a cough, he eats nothing but water-gruel. I do not see him, but I have sent to him twice. I thank God my old heart is whole, but I am mightily troubled with pain in my limbs when I offer to stir."

After that, Algernon Sidney no longer held aloof, and his sister saw him frequently, although, as she confesses, his temper had not been improved by years and disappointments.

"Our brother Algernon," she wrote joyfully to Henry Sidney, "has been once with me ; how far he will proceed, I know not ; I gave him a very civil reception ; though we were alone a great part of the time, we did not say a word of any difference that has been.

"He looks very ill."

And again, ten days later : "My brother Algernon, upon my sending to know how he did when he was ill, has come to me three times, and I believe will continue it, for he seems very well pleased with it. We have not said one word of any difference, and I never contradict him when he says such things as that Sir William Coventry is no more an able man than a handsome man."

She has a kind word even for Lord Leicester, and is eager to tell Henry Sidney he has shown signs of relenting towards him.

"My son told me that my brother Leicester speaks kindly of you ; he inquires how I do, but that is all the favour I am like to have. I let it alone."

CHAPTER XXII

1680

Southampton Square—Mr. Pierpoint and Mrs. Pelham—Lady Sunderland's Letters on her Niece's Marriage.

NOTHING in Lady Sunderland's letters is more remarkable than her deep attachment to the different members of her large family. Whether they are Sidneys or Pelhams, Spencers or Smythes, it is all one. She takes the deepest interest in their affairs, and is just as eager that Robin Spencer, her first husband's brother, should get the place at Court he hankers after, as that Henry Sidney should win renown in the King's service, or that Lucy Pelham should make a good marriage. We have seen how loyal she was to her son, even when his conduct grieved her the most, and her feelings were the most divided. And we have also seen how bitterly she deplored the quarrels which had estranged her three brothers, and how earnestly she tried to make peace.

Her letters to Lord Halifax are full of affectionate inquiries about his children, "the little rogues" as she calls his boys, and of tender messages to his daughter, her "dear Nan." And next to her own children and grandchildren, her nephews and nieces are most in her thoughts. These were the sons and daughters of her sister, Lady Lucy Pelham, whose husband, Sir John Pelham, was the representative of an old Sussex family. They lived chiefly at their country house of Holland, and Sir John, who was a great sufferer from gout, seems to have been as unwilling to leave his home as most country gentlemen of advancing years. His eldest son, Tom Pelham, afterwards created Lord Pelham, whose

name appears so often in his aunt's letters, was in Parliament, and had a house in Southampton Square. He had married the daughter of Sir William Jones, formerly Attorney-General, whom Sir William Temple calls "a very wise, able man, and the greatest lawyer in England." Lady Sunderland however in her secret heart looked on her nephew's marriage as decidedly beneath him. She speaks of his wife as a pert, ill-bred creature, and owns to having an unconquerable dislike for "father Jones," as she calls him in her letters. His rough manners and disagreeable temper were naturally distasteful to her, his opinions still more so.

Sir William was intimate with Lord Russell and the chief leaders of the popular party, and his father-in-law's influence had naturally drawn Tom Pelham into the same camp. We find frequent allusions in Lady Sunderland's letters to the little *coterie* in that part of town. Lord and Lady Russell were then living at Southampton House, afterwards better known as Bedford House, which Rachel Wriothesley had inherited from her father, the Lord Treasurer Southampton. This noble mansion, with its great gates, adorned with stone sphinxes, then occupied the whole of the north side of Southampton or Bloomsbury Square, and its beautiful lawns and stately avenues of lime trees spread over a great part of Russell Square.

Close by was Montague House, the home of her sister, Lady Northumberland, and Mr. Montague, while in the same neighbourhood Lord and Lady Shaftesbury were also living. These were the neighbours who, in Lady Sunderland's opinion, befooled her nephews in Southampton Square, and whose bad advice made Tom Pelham and Ned Montague so violent in their language against the King and his ministers. Her own sympathies, we know, were all with Halifax and the moderate party, and she had the strongest possible aversion to Lord Shaftesbury, and all that concerned him and his friends. Lady Russell's letters show how much these families saw of each other, and how constant was the interchange of visits and gossip that was carried on between them. The ladies are always running in and out of each other's houses, eating oysters and playing ombre and basset, backgammon

and beast. The men drop in of an afternoon and discuss the latest political views, the last report from the city, or the prospects of the Bill of Exclusion, whenever Parliament meets again. Then there are dinners at Lord Shaftesbury's, and at Montague House, and much reading of letters, and great talk of the Duchess of Portsmouth and Mrs. Nell Gwynne's doings, and of the sums which Lord Cavendish or Lord Sunderland gamble away, and the fine airs of the great beauty, my Lady Betty Felton, who turns the heads of all the men, and quarrels with all the women, and lies in bed and cries when things are not altogether to her taste.

And among all the Court gossip and strife of tongues we have the usual record of the thousand small events of every day, which forms so large a share of women's lives, of the births and the marriages, and the children's ailments, which were just as important, in the writers' eyes, as those rumours of wars and sedition that were stirring the whole nation's heart.

One day, we hear that Mrs. Pelham has been brought to bed of a fair daughter. "So the sport," Lady Russell writes, "has begun in our Square." The next, Lucy Pelham's marriage is the absorbing topic of the hour, and every one is asking whether Mr. Pierpoint is her equal in rank and fortune, what settlements he will make upon her, if he is likely to be a good husband.

Sir John's elder daughter, Elizabeth Pelham, was already the wife of Edward Montague, a grandson of the first Earl of Manchester, and nephew to Lord Leicester's old friend and correspondent, Walter Montague, who had embraced the Roman faith and become Abbot of Pontoise. It was her sister Lucy, whose marriage was now occupying the attention of the ladies in Southampton Square. The suitor in question was Gervase Pierpoint, afterwards raised to the peerage as Lord Pierpoint of Ardglass, the fifth son of William Pierpoint of Thoresby, and brother of Lady Halifax. The connection of the young man with her own son-in-law naturally increased Lady Sunderland's interest in the marriage. Several of her letters are entirely taken up with this important subject, and she throws herself into the business, and discusses every

particular of the arrangements with as keen a zest as if the bride were her own daughter. When Lady Lucy herself is ill, and Sir John refuses to come to town, she herself undertakes to conduct negotiations with Lady Halifax and Mr. Pierpoint, and brings them to a successful issue. We find the first mention of the subject in a letter which she writes to Henry Sidney in January 1680.

“What news soever is sent you out of Southampton Square, I will venture a wager, is not true of the public; for our private affairs there, I have had a hard task. My sister does suspect that there are some there who have no mind Lucy should be so well married as to Mr. Pierpoint, and I am confident she is in the right, and not to lie, and to keep her from thinking one of her opinion, needs a great wariness, which I have had. Between you and I, there is dissembling amongst them. Good Sir John is none of them, but I believe no block can be laid to hinder the marriage. The gentleman proceeds so fairly. He has given his particulars; £200 a year in land, £5000 more in money, both certain after his aunt's death, who is threescore years old, and has a quartern ague, by whom I believe more will come. To be her heir is something,” she adds merrily, “but if I were forty years younger than I am, I would not care to be yours!

“My brother Pelham requires other particulars than he has yet. He thinks that he has given too generally, which Mr. Pierpoint has sent to his bailiffs. An estate in that family will never be found less than they say. One finds fault that he does not talk; that is better than what they say sometimes! Another finds fault with his person, who have little reason, God knows! to meddle with that. I tell them, I am not to be bribed, but if any will bring a better, I will quit his party. I have been a little peevish to them, so I shall hear no more; but she is so wise as to find no fault. The worst of him is his complexion, and the small-pox is not out of his face yet, he had them but eight months ago.”

Her task, it is plain, was not altogether easy. Sister-in-law Jones and brothers Pelham and Montague were very ready to cavil and find fault! And an alliance with any one of the rival leader's family connections was not likely to be

looked upon with favour in Southampton Square. But Lady Sunderland persevered, and a week or two later she was able to inform Henry Sidney that she had brought the affair to a triumphant conclusion.

“I think I have almost ended our marriage treaty before my brother Pelham comes. I have sent for him, but our poor sister has had low fits of a tertian ague. How far I have gone, I will tell you. I had leave to offer £7000 upon the marriage, rather than have broke it. I believe £8000 would have been given, but I had order to get one thousand not to be paid till my brother dies, so I have done it for that portion. The jointure was left to me. I demanded £1000 a year and his London house, and I have got it; I will make her thank me for the house, for her father would have never thought of it for her; but a very pretty house, so furnished as that, will be very considerable to a woman. Henry Savile has told me all that is to be in it. Six coach horses are buying. My Lady Halifax is to choose the coach that she is to have apart, and his equipage will be two footmen and a page for herself.”

The bargain, she felt satisfied, was a very good one for her niece, whatever any one else might choose to say, and she reflected with not a little pride on her share in the business. But all the same she is not wholly free from misgivings, as she goes on to confess.

“Now I have told the good show, I must come to the ill one. His person is ugly: last night he came to me with his sister. He is well enough dressed and behaved, of very few words. As soon as my brother comes to town, he will carry him the particulars of his estate, which I believe is not stretched. My Lady Halifax says she had rather say less than more; the fortune is good no doubt, and she will do better than many who have double. I desired her to tell me if she had any distaste to him, and I would order it so that it should not go on, and her father should not be angry with her, but she is wiser than to refuse it. He is not more ill-favoured than Montague, and *his* wife kisses him all day and calls him her pretty dear!”

If only she can feel tolerably certain of the man's character,

and of her niece's liking for him, all will be well, but when she finds the sister-in-law and cousins in Southampton Square shake their heads over the marriage, and are full of ill forebodings, she grows a little uneasy again.

"I see one thing very plain, that is very ill—they are not pleased with Lucy's marriage. I hope my sister will not find it out, she shall not know it by me. She and my brother are very well pleased with me, and so is she too, but she behaves herself very well. I told you in my last how far I had gone. My brother came to town last night on my summons. I believe he will find no difficulty, and the estate rather better than I represented it. Her brother tells me she needs no persuasion to it, though his person is not taking, but 'tis like to do very well. He is very bashful, and to strangers backward to speak. He was alone with me, and I found his sense very good. I would not let him go to her till her father came to town. I was told by a very understanding person, that those who know him well say he is a very honest, worthy gentleman—that was the expression."

On the 19th of February, Lady Sunderland writes again, and after telling her brother that Lady Halifax is going down to Rufford to join her husband, and that Nan is full of regrets to think she will not be at her cousin's wedding, she goes on to report progress.

"I think all is agreed upon now. The articles were signed yesterday, and the gentleman had leave to wait upon his mistress. My brother is gone home and the writings are to be drawn. The marriage must be at Holland. In some respects, I am sorry for it. My sister had a great mind to come, and I should have been glad to have seen her. My brother thought it would be more expense and not handsome; because of his great relations, I believe he did consider this the more. Mr. Algernon never goes to them, though they have sought him, so that I have wondered at it often. All the women went to see him, the married Pelham and the two sisters, and the men did, but he has used them so abominably, they are ashamed of it, though he did before the treaty of this marriage. They would some of them lay it upon that. I told them if anybody would bring a better, I would change

my party. I had no bribe, but I saw some thought this too good. For my part, I think neither of them well married, but this is a good deal better than Montague, though she calls him her pretty dear, and kisses him a thousand times in a day. I tell Lucy she shall not do so. Hers will be much such a pretty dear!

"Nan Savile is very comical about this business. Sometimes they are great friends and very familiar. Mr. Pierpoint has promised her, that if he is so happy as to have Mrs. Pelham, and that she is willing, they shall come to Rufford this summer. This is an article of marriage that has given great satisfaction.

"The thing has been done that I did not much approve of but I said nothing. Mr. Pierpoint readily did consent to it, but I thought it so little a thing for them to ask, which is, that if she dies and leaves no child, the £2000 to be paid at her father's death shall not be paid, or returned again if it be. This was a foresight of Tom Pelham's."

After this, some of the relations still made difficulties, but in the end Mr. Pierpoint won the day, and Lady Sunderland rejoiced to see that the bride and her parents appeared perfectly satisfied. She wrote to Henry Sidney on the 27th of February—

"Our marriage is all fully agreed; and now our good-natured sister and Lucy, who has some of her easiness from a good cause, with a few compliments, forget what *they* have done. You know in some play it is, 'Now you are King, who says you are not?' All is as well as can be. They shall not be put in mind of their thoughts by me. He will be a great deal richer than he has given in as sure to him. He has sent down the writings to my brother Pelham yesterday, drawn by Sir William Jones's directions."

When she wrote again, on the 12th of March, the wedding-day was already fixed.

"I am very glad when I have a letter from you, but I do not expect you, that have a great deal to do, and I that have nothing, should write as many letters to me as I do to you. I will let Mr. Pierpoint know your willingness to favour him.

He was gone out of town yesterday before I had your letter. He and his mistress, Montague and his wife, went down to Holland with Sir John. Next week they are to be married. To-morrow Tom Pelham goes, but not his wife, because she is with child. Her father was unwilling that she should go, and they dare do nothing but what he likes. Our sister will have enough upon her hands with her new body, and he so bashful a man that needs encouragement. I never saw anybody more than he is. She is pleased with them all now, and so is everyone with this marriage, I think, that is kind to her. Mr. Montague, I am confident, is not; but I do not now suspect anybody else. When I did, it was from them I had my reasons. Her father might have married her worse and cheaper.

“This day my Lord Sunderland is gone to Althorpe, and Mr. Smith [her son, Robert Smyth] has left the mirth of Holland, where he was invited, to go with him. Mr. Godolphin goes to Newmarket, and receives all my son's packets; if there is any occasion for his being there, Godolphin is to send for him, if not, he does not go. His Majesty and the City of London are upon very good terms. When he supped this week at the Lord Mayor's, the people showed as much of affection and duty as the expressions at such a time could be. The Lady Mayoress sat next to the King, all over scarlet and ermine, and half over diamonds. The Alderman drank the King's health over and over, upon their knees, and wished all hanged and damned that would not serve him with their lives and fortunes. They attended him to Whitehall at two o'clock in the morning. They would not trust him with his guards, who were all drunk, but brought some of their own, and they all went merry out of the King's cellar. The next day, they came in a full body, to give both the King and the Duke thanks for the honour they had done them. The Mayor is now as well affected as anybody, and was as ill.

“Mr. Savile does show what is very probable, that he has no business, by his writing so many witty letters that nobody could do if any thing else were in his head. Some persons who the King is displeased with, have made addresses to the Duke, to whom he has made an answer, that they must first

deserve to be well with the King, and they should not fail of being so with him. My Lord Ogle does prove the saddest creature of all kinds, that could have been fit to be named for my Lady Percy, as ugly as anything young can be. The ladies of Northumberland House are going to Petworth, and he to his father, to have good counsel."

Lord Ogle was the only son of the Duke of Newcastle, and had just married the great heiress, Lady Elizabeth Percy, the only child of Jocelyn Percy, last Earl of Northumberland, and of Lady Elizabeth Wriothsley, now the wife of Ralph Montague. The bride, who had been the object of so much wrangling between her mother and grandmother, the elder Countess Dowager of Northumberland—"the ladies of Northumberland House," to whom the writer here alludes—was married at twelve years old to Lord Ogle. After his death in the following year, she became the wife of Thomas Thynne of Longleat, who was shot as he drove down Pall Mall in his coach, at the instigation of a disappointed rival, Count Konigsmarck. Lady Ogle herself, repenting of the marriage, had fled to Holland the moment after the wedding, but returned after Mr. Thynne's assassination, and in 1682 married the Duke of Somerset. Thus, before she was sixteen she was twice a widow and three times a wife.

Lady Sunderland continues—

"Just now Tom Pelham has been with me, and hindered my writing; but 'tis no matter, for I have little to say. He is very factious, but they are more quiet there than they have been. He confesses that he was one of them that thought the King supped at the Lord Mayor's against his will, and that it was done to make him lose his credit; but he is of another mind now, by the manner of it there, and what he has done since. I draw very little consequence from the acclamations of the people.

"Poor Mrs. Hervey is going to Kew with her brother-in-law. My Lady Hervey and Mr. Montague are very busy and officious to serve her. I am not apt to think they do anything out of good-nature or generosity. To you I am very truly affected.

"D. S."

The Pelham wedding took place about the 20th of March at Holland, and a few days later Lady Sunderland gave her brother the benefit of the latest information which had reached her on the subject.

“After our wedding at Holland, I had a letter from Mr. Montague that made me fear that Mr. Pierpoint was not liked; but he is, I doubt, a little malicious, for Tom Pelham has been with me since. He says, for our niece, she is, he thinks, as well pleased as he has seen anybody. My sister is very well satisfied as to the fortune, and the probability of her living well, but she loves more compliments and mirth than she will ever find. I prepared her, as well as I could, not to expect it. He is not a pleasant man—very few are; neither is he the very best sort for entertainment. One thing pleased. When he said, ‘With all my worldly goods I thee endow,’ he puts a purse upon the book with 200 guineas; everybody puts somewhat, but this is the most I have heard. They will be here before Easter, and then you shall hear more.”

True to her promise she writes, on the 6th of April—

“To-morrow our new-married couple will be here; all I hear from thence is satisfaction. He very fond, and Mr. Montague writ to me that her kindness might be called so too. I intend to keep my authority over her, so that she shall not call him her pretty dear, as her sister does him.”

And when the happy pair have arrived in town, she resumes her pen and continues—

“Our new-married niece is as well pleased as ever I saw anybody. She says he is as kind as she can desire. Notwithstanding Pierpoint blood, he is very willing to let her have everything to the uttermost of his fortune. He bids her buy what plate or furniture she will, and he will pay for it. Her brother and I have had a serious discourse upon her management, which we both suspect, for she is giddy, and delighted with liberty and money. We have resolved to give her the best advice we can, that she may not abuse his freeness to her, for his great rich relations will not think well of her, if she is too expensive. She is a little too free and too merry in appearance, and he very grave, and has an ill

opinion of his own person. Her brother [Tom Pelham] and brother-in-law [Edward Montague] have both desired me to advise her; her own brother means as he ought to do in it, but not the other."

Fortunately her mother is "much delighted with the marriage," very well pleased to find "the fortune proves much better than it was given in by him, and satisfied that he is very fond of her."

But alas! these halcyon days of early wedded life were not to last long. The poor bride, whose giddy young head was so much elated with the prospect of independence and money, soon found the thorn that was lurking in the rose. A month later Lady Sunderland had changed her tone. Mr. Pierpoint, it is plain, has a bad temper, and is a meddling, troublesome fool, who will give neither his wife nor his servants hopes of a quiet life. This time she confides her fears not to Henry Sidney at the Hague, but to a more trusted friend, Lord Halifax. She is safe with him she knows, and she whispers the rumours which disturb her mind in his ear, not without some trepidation.

"Here is my secret. I fear Mr. Pierpoint will not prove a good husband. He is yet fond of her, but so unquiet in his house and so miserable, the servants say, in all that is not for show, that they are all weary and coming away. He calls the women all the ill names that are, and meddles with everything in the kitchen much. I have not spoken with her alone a great while. All this is at Montague's, and will soon be everywhere. Yesterday I heard he would put away her woman for saying, God bless her mistress, she would be glad never to see her master again. She is very melancholy. But there is not a word of dislike to anything in her behaviour. I believe she does not know what to do in a house."

Halifax, in reply, begged Lady Sunderland to give her niece a little good advice, and above all things to try and avoid a scandal. Upon which she hastened to assure him that she has done her utmost, and that on the whole the girl is inclined to make the best of a difficult position.

"I assure you, my Lord, I have given my niece the best advice I can, and I think she is, herself, inclined to good. I

have heard things that make me think she will have a hard task ; she does not complain and will not own what I know ; though it is not very kind, I do not blame her for it. I have desired that she will not be more free with her other friends. My sister would be troubled and show it, and others would be glad and talk. She does observe him as much as possible. Severity not well understood has no bounds."

Unfortunately the letters on the subject end here, and we do not hear how the marriage turned out eventually. But since history is silent, and the names of our newly-married pair do not figure in the *chronique scandaleuse* of these days, we may argue well for its future course, and hope that Mr. Pierpoint was a better husband and Mrs. Pelham had a happier life than Lady Sunderland anticipated, even if their marriage did not prove altogether as complete and blissful a union of hearts, as her own experience had led her to believe in.

CHAPTER XXIII

1680

Halifax at Rufford—Lady Sunderland's Letters—Her Son's Ambitious Designs—Anne, Lady Sunderland—The King's Illness.

ALL that spring and summer Lord Halifax remained at Rufford, in as ill a climate, he remarks, for politics as for melons, enjoying the beauties of the forest, which were fairer in his eyes than all Henry Savile's fine walks at Fontainebleau, and engaged in the pleasures and duties of a country gentleman, as he delighted to call himself.

"Poor old Rufford mourneth that she cannot see you," he wrote to his brother, who came over to London on a hurried visit of a week or two. "Now she hath her best clothes on, she has a little to brag of, but yet she sayeth her flies are harmless, and the air is clear; and if it was possible for a statesman to love ease and quiet and silence, you would rather enjoy them with bilberries, than eat melons in the crowd and dust of a wandering court."

But his presence was anxiously looked for by his friends in London, and more than one attempt was made to bring him back to Court. Early in March, Lady Sunderland addressed him a letter, in which she gives him a message to this effect from her brother Henry, and laments the departure of her dear Nan with the rest of his family for Rufford. "If I had anything to say worth a secret, this is a good way to convey it, but I am not so much obliged to anybody. My dear Lord, I must write, though I dare do no more, for your making a journey hither the end of March, or beginning of April. The 20th of March the King goes to Newmarket, and the 25th

my son to Althorpe. They will think, as the Mutineers say, that you will come no more till a Parliament sits. As the Queen said of you, I believe you have not told *them* your mind, nor I hope never will, for they are your enemies and the nation's too, who wish not one honest man near the King. My brother Harry wrote to me your being in the country is the worst news he has heard a great while; he is so silly as to write to *me* to beg of you to come again!

“Our Secretary [Lord Sunderland], Mr. Godolphin, and Hyde do hold their league. Waller told me with a great oath that my son was sick of the Duchess of Portsmouth, and would be glad, with all his heart, to be rid of her, and that she does now make more court to him and his wife than they do to her. The King does seem to be as fond of the Duke's coming as if he were a mistress of not above a week's date. That does not agree with what I am told, that it will be seen that he will have little power in affairs. My Lord Winchester is a great courtier—a new man in health, not in many other things. I fear Lord Spencer will be no great comfort to his friends. I doubt he has no good nature nor good humour, but is scornful and too pretending. He comes to me seldom, seems weary in a minute, and talks to me of my company as if I picked them up in the streets. My Lord Sunderland, at his age, did nothing like it. He will be spoiled. That I see plainly.”

This foolish youth, who treated his grandmother and her company with such contempt, seems to have inherited his father's worst faults, with none of his ability. His mother remarked to Henry Sidney, in a letter written about this time, “My Lord Spencer is in town, and the prettiest boy in all kinds in it.” But her friend Evelyn was so much shocked at his taste for gambling and dissipated habits, that he refused to help him in a marriage with the great heiress Mrs. Jane Fox, daughter of his friend, Sir Stephen Fox, which his mother was very anxious to effect. The young lady had a lucky escape, for this hopeful youth went from bad to worse, and after rambling about the world, dishonouring his name and family, and mixing himself up in every kind of disreputable affair, he died of a wound received in a duel at Paris, in 1688.

"If I had any state affairs," Lady Sunderland continues, "you should not have this stuff: nor that Sir Edward Villiers [afterwards Earl of Jersey] makes love to my Lady Ogle. I do not take it from the medisance of the town, but the discreetest that is amongst them. He pleases my Lady Northumberland so much, with asking her counsel and her assistance for some affairs, she thinks he comes to the house for no other design, and he loses every penny that he has there. I am melancholy at parting with my dear Nan. My Lord Winchester has lately put a great sum of money into the Exchequer, and is as busy as ever he was. He goes every Saturday to my Lord Bellasis, and a monied man, Duncombe, with him. My dear Lord, I love you with all my heart.

"D. S."

Duncombe was a rich alderman, a friend of Henry Savile's, who was afterwards knighted, and who bought the Duke of Buckingham's estate at Helmsley in Yorkshire, a fact which Pope celebrated in the well-known lines—

"And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
Slides to a scrivener and city knight."

This fine place in Yorkshire became known as Duncombe Park, and is still the property of his descendants, the Earls of Feversham.

No persuasion, however, could induce Halifax to return to Court until there was some prospect of the meeting of Parliament. He remained "a happy man" at Rufford, and left his colleague, Sunderland, to his own devices. No one knew better than that nobleman how insecure his position was, how difficult the part he had to play in his anxiety to be well thought of both by King and people. And this sense of insecurity only made him more reckless. Honest men shook their heads when they heard how the Chief Secretary of State gambled away as much as £5000 a night at basset, and his wife complained to Henry Sidney that "this cursed play was doing his reputation untold harm."

"My Lord," she wrote, "has fallen to play to a more violent degree than ever, all day and night. It makes the horridest

noise in the world ; 'tis talked of in all the coffee-houses, and 'tis for such vast sums."

These disquieting rumours naturally reached his mother's ears, and filled her with anxiety ; but in her letters to her brother she is careful not to repeat anything to her son's discredit, and merely alludes to the rumours of his removal from office, which were now commonly circulated.

"Some of your intelligence," she wrote on the 22nd of March, "I believe will tell of a report, as much believed as ever I did know any lie, as that I dare say is, that my Lord of Sunderland is either in disgrace or dissatisfied, but no longer Secretary. I had heard so particularly the story, and not only what came out of the coffee-houses, but in every chamber in the town, and amongst those who are left in Whitehall 'tis as much as anywhere ; and all say 'tis for some difference between him and my Lord Lauderdale, which for the present recommends him very much to the town ; but their kindness upon the account of his disgrace at Court will not last very long, I hope.

"Mr. Montague goes no more to Madame Mazarine ; the town says he is forbid ; whether his love or his politics were too pressing, I know not. I hear he has lately endeavoured to make his peace at Court ; but it will not be, and he is reduced to spend much of his time at my Lady Oxford's. Perhaps you will think I express it ill ; but no matter for that. The Duchess of Modena may be come, but I do not know it ; I do know that nobody will go to her, nor to the Duchess, when she is with her.

"I heard last night the Council had sat twice yesterday, about information given of a design the apprentices had to rise, and that some were got together ; but all is very quiet, and my intelligence must ever be late, for I write in the mornings, and I see nobody but in the afternoon. My Lord Shaftesbury says he never had anything to do with Mr. Montague, nor never will. His son has not much to do, for he is every night in Hyde Park with his wife, and two dirty men at the other end of the coach. My Lady Lauderdale, who was ill of the gout at Whitehall, was on Sunday sent for to Ham in great haste to her Lord, who was fallen into a fit

of an apoplexy. If he dies, that will be a loss to Scotland and England.

“I am yours very affectionately,
“D. S.”

In April Henry Sidney himself had a serious attack of illness, and obtained leave of absence from his post, but was detained by business and ill-health at the Hague till the beginning of June. His friends at home were greatly concerned for him, and his sister inquired anxiously after his health in her next two letters.

“*April 6th.*”

“DEAR AMBASSADOR,—More than one, I think, by your kind deeds. I am sorry to hear you have not been well, which my son told me of; but with it, he did hope to see you in a short time. He does say the kindest things of you in the world, and all that is possible to show everybody how well you have done. The Mutineers are enraged that the King does anything well, or anybody well to him, and that he does not break the laws every day. Yet these pretend to be the only people for the good of the nation. The Duke meddles so little, 'tis as if he was grown extremely wise and subdued; I say 'tis the first. For the politics you have them from your friend, the Secretary. . . . A cousin of ours has done a fine trick. My Lady Anne Balendine ran away from her husband, and left a letter upon her table to say she was gone where she should see more happy days than she ever did with him! Mr. Finch's vigilance in the search of her has brought her back to her house again. Who she did go to, is not out yet; I suppose not to live alone. Some say she went to be cured of that which you used to laugh at me for calling roguery. Every way she is a fine lady. I have taken physick. I love you, pray for you, and long to see you.

“D. S.”

“The Duke of Monmouth is as little regarded as the Earl of Huntingdon, though many lies are told to bear him up.”

Again, on the 16th of April, she wrote—

"I never was so glad of a letter from you as the last, and that is saying a great deal. Two days before, my son told me he had one from your secretary, and none from you, because you were not able to write. This troubled me very much, but I thank God by your kindness I was relieved, for which I most heartily thank you. I am pleased further with the hopes of seeing you shortly. Your friend in Court saith you have been industrious and successful in the greatest affair of Europe. There are others who say nothing is done, but I believe some of them know they lie. My Lord of Shaftesbury went out of town on Easter Eve for fear of tumults in the holidays, which should be chiefly contrived to kill him. This great value he puts upon himself is more than anybody else does.

"I am vexed at my Lord Halifax's not coming to town. I doubt not but he will; I love things well-timed. I hope some of his wise friends will persuade him. My Lord of Essex is as much at Court as if he had more employment than a Privy Councillor, and I believe repents he is not, now he sees the King does not do irregular things, which perhaps they did fear. I know my letter will be safe in the Secretary's packet, or else I would not be so free. It has made Mr. Hyde a great man by his having much occasion to show his parts; but our friend is the chief, every one says. He is very sanguine, I find, in public affairs. The truth is, there is every appearance of a change. The Mutineers, as the Court calls them, cannot work now. I know not what they can do in Parliament. Both city and country have a mind to be quiet. If lies will support them, they will not fail. If they do no more good in other things than they have done to the Duke of Monmouth, they had as good give over that way. I am told warrants are out for the Duke of Buckingham. He was in town, and was seen there by several, though some refused to go to him. 'Tis said there will be great proofs against him. I am interrupted.

"Yours very affectionately,

"D. S."

Lord Sunderland's wife was as sanguine as he himself felt, or pretended to feel at this moment. "All goes to our hearts'

desire. The King is unalterable," she tells Henry Sidney. "And neither you nor I need fear the Duchess of Portsmouth, nor anything else." She writes in high spirits, on the eve of going to Windsor with the Court, and mingles expressions of concern for Mr. Sidney's illness with her own affairs.

"I won't go about to tell you the pain I have been in for your being so sick, and consequently the comfort it is to me to hear you are better, and then how all joyed I am to think we shall have you here awhile with me. My Lord says he has sent you word you may come. If I live to see you, I daresay I shall entertain you very well with the account of what has passed since you went. In the meantime I shall only beg you to make what haste your health will permit, and believe me no lady ever wished you so well as I do. I am in a sad hurry with removing to Windsor, which we do on Monday se'nnight, when, if you have any commands for me, I shall be overjoyed to execute them. But now I come with another request, which is, that you will employ all your skill, and all your most knowing acquaintances' skill, for one pair of the finest and largest grey coach-horses, the most dappled, the stateliest persons you can possible get. There shall go from hence a coachman that shall come over with them, because I would have him see a little how they order them. Pray, Mr. Sidney, take care of this matter, for you cannot imagine how much you will oblige me in it. They are for ourselves, but pray don't let my Lord know of them till they are here. I will send you by Friday's post a bill of exchange for £100, which I imagine will do the business. If there should want a little more, let me know it. Let me hear when you come away, and pray let me have two very handsome, large, broad-backed beasts. Don't think me very troublesome nor impertinent, and be assured I'll serve you all my life, whenever I can."

The Court was hardly settled at Windsor before the King's serious illness threw terror into all hearts. Fortunately this second attack of ague yielded to the same remedies which the doctors had employed with so much success before, and the fears of the nation were allayed. Dorothy, Lady Sunderland, alluded to the general feeling of dismay which had been excited, in a letter to Henry Sidney on the 18th of May.

“I had given you last post the kindest thanks you can imagine for the pleasure I had in your kind letter, and that you were better in your health ; but I was then, like most others, out of my wits with the King’s being ill, and greater distraction never was anywhere for the time. Thanks be to God, it did not last long. I have not heard to-day, but yesterday he was very well. But I take the less comfort in it, because he has taken the Jesuits’ powder. The fits he had did not last above two or three hours. In this time there were several parties met to counsel in their fright. God keep the nation from the experiment of what they could have done. I will not trouble you with my comments, but if the King continues well, my son will go in a short time to Althorpe. There my Lord Halifax will meet him, but when he will be here I know not. Sir William Coventry is there.

“Mrs. Fraser has taken her leave at the Court, in order, they say, to being owned my Lady Mordaunt, though yet he denies it, but she and her friends do not ; so two deplorable things to two of our prime young lords have happened, his marriage and my Lord of Shrewsbury’s eye, which is out and with great deformity yet, and the other in danger. I have acquainted my Lord Halifax with your very kind offer to his son, which I do heartily thank you for. I hope he will deserve kindness from all his friends. His father is not inclined to have him go into Flanders, therefore he has laid aside the thoughts of it. The rain and thunder is in extremity at this instant, it gives me ten spleens besides my own. This weather, I hope, will keep my sister in town a few days longer. She was always very kind to me, but her daughter’s marriage has made her more so. If my love is worth anything, upon my honest word you have more of it than ever you had or can care for. Next post I will write again. I expect no return in a great while.

“D. S.”

And on the same day her daughter-in-law wrote from Windsor—

“We have all been sadly alarmed with the King’s being sick, but he is now very well again, and I hope will continue

so, if he can be kept from fishing when a dog would not be abroad."

The panic was over for the moment, but these repeated alarms made the settlement of the succession more important than ever. Sunderland had decided on his own course, and played his part with his usual astuteness. While, in the world's eye, he occupied the post of Charles II.'s most trusted and confidential adviser, he was all the time plotting with the leaders of the popular party, and he had secretly resolved to support the Bill of Exclusion when Parliament met, and bring over the Prince of Orange to press forward his claims. Many are the mysterious hints to this effect which his wife drops in her letters to Henry Sidney, and at last she writes joyfully: "That you may guess how well it is, I shall only tell you that I take *the Duke to be undone.*"

The Duchess of Portsmouth had been persuaded to use her influence with the King on the same side, in the imaginary hope that once the Duke of York was excluded from the succession, her own son, the Duke of Richmond, might be declared heir to the Crown. But, for the complete success of Sunderland's plan, it was necessary if possible to secure the co-operation of Lord Halifax, and at all events to obtain his return to Court. For this purpose, repeated communications were made to him, and many were the messages which Lady Sunderland conveyed to him from her son and brother. But Halifax was determined not to show his face in town until the autumn, and all he could be induced to do was to meet Sunderland and Henry Sidney at Althorp in June.

CHAPTER XXIV

1680

Lady Sunderland's Letters to Lord Halifax—Messages from her Son—
Meeting at Althorp—Court Gossip—Henry Savile at Paris.

TEN letters were addressed to Lord Halifax at Rufford, that summer, by his mother-in-law, Lady Sunderland. For the benefit of her absent friend she collects all the news she can glean from the town gossips, and reports to him in her lively strain all that is happening at Court and in the Council, all that her son and brother tell her, all that people are saying either for him, or against him. No wonder he enjoyed her letters in the solitude of his country home, and was delighted to secure the services of so good a correspondent in town.

On the 9th of June she writes—

“I am, my dear Lord, now employed by my son to write to you, though he intends to do it himself this night. But he is not sure of his time, because my brother is expected every minute. He bids me tell you he cannot be at Althorpe this fortnight. He desires you will not disappoint him of seeing you; he says he has a great deal to tell you, and that you will like very well. I have heard that which makes me hope the King will disappoint those that are enemies to him and peace, by the best arms he can do it with, acts of justice, moderation and observing the laws, and the using no tricks, but dealing sincerely, openly, without any secrets, especially such as passed between my Lord Danby and Mr. Montague. The King was here yesterday, at Council, which was doubtful the day before. My son returned with His Majesty, but my

daughter [Anne, Lady Sunderland] is here to my cost. She has begged a dinner of me to-day.

"All the talk now is of those who are going to Tangier immediately, my Lord Mulgrave who commands all, and several volunteers, I know not who. My Lord Shrewsbury did offer to go, but the doctors say the sickness at sea will put out his other eye, therefore the King has commanded him not to go. My Lord Mordaunt [afterwards the famous Lord Peterborough] does; whose being married [to Mrs. Fraser, one of the Queen's ladies] few do doubt, and that he repents it and is ashamed. The sending these men does cost £58,000 and does not disorder the Exchequer at all in the rules that they have set. They hope, if the wind is good, to be there before the fort is taken. If they should be to get it back again, it will be hot service. They will have many prayers."

Tangier had been taken from the Moors by Alfonso, King of Portugal, and formed part of Katharine of Braganza's marriage portion. But it proved a very useless and expensive possession to England, and justified the truth of Temple's saying, that, considering the cost of keeping it, England would not be the worse off if the town and forts could be blown into the air. After being repeatedly attacked and taken by the Moors, and defended by English forces, and after vast sums had been spent on its fortifications, the town was abandoned and all the works destroyed by the King's order in 1683. Lady Sunderland's next sentence alludes to the depositions made before the Council, relating to the King's supposed marriage with Lucy Walters, mother of the Duke of Monmouth, who was endeavouring in vain to prove his legitimacy. The marriage certificate was said to have been placed in a black box, but it was never produced, and the King himself publicly owned the Duke's illegitimacy.

"This day will come out all the examinations about the black box, with a declaration that will not, I suppose, legitimate the Duke of Monmouth.

"There is a private affair as much talked of in town as anything of more importance, which is the buying of the Dukedom for the Pierpoint family. Mr. Pierpoint came to me two days ago, much alarmed with the belief that it would

be had. He said his sister Pierpoint had a promise of it, that he had been with his aunt to see the security for the £20,000; to that she would add £8000 to be a Duchess into the bargain. Three thousand pounds, I believe, have been offered to be added to the £20,000, and that she owned a promise of it. This I did wonder at very much. I thought I had good reason to think it would not be done, but Court resolutions are not so firm as the laws of the Medes and Persians. He desired me to enquire as I have, and am now assured that the King has positively and scornfully rejected it, as not allowing any such thing to be sold. Mrs. Pierpoint is abominably abused by Somebody [the Duchess of Portsmouth], perhaps not meaning to do it neither, but believing the poverty of the Court would take such a sum, and they would have a snip out of it, the proposal has been brought to everybody that has any credit; and but yesterday Mr. Pierpoint was busy to get the money upon the security; for my Lord Dorchester pauses at it, and says he cannot pay the money nor does he desire to be a Duke.

“There is much notice taken of Mr. Hyde's being often with Sir William Jones, who is sorry, with all his heart, he is not Attorney General. My son speaks very confidently of the Parliament sitting in November. If there is occasion from abroad, sooner. Your Lordship knows he is sanguine, and he believes the King of France will not fall upon Flanders this summer.”

This rumoured invasion of Flanders by Louis XIV. had excited much alarm both in Flanders and at the Hague, and is frequently mentioned in Henry Savile's letters from Paris. Halifax had, on this account, declined Henry Sidney's invitation to his son, Lord Eland, who had intended to travel through Flanders and pay his great-uncle a visit at the Hague, and wrote to his brother that this would be an unpleasant progress, since by the complexion of things, Flanders would hardly be a quiet place this summer. “The King of France,” he continues, “hath a great pleasure to see how all the world trembleth under him, for I suppose it a satisfaction suitable to his heroic mind, but for my own particular, was I in his place, I could find out a hundred

things that would please me more than to keep Flanders and Germany from sleeping, for fear of him. These great preparations must have some matter to work upon; and by what I see, whenever he falleth, all the revenge they have upon him is by an immediate yielding to take away the relish of his victory."

Lady Sunderland's letter goes on—

"My Lady Scroope is very angry, Mr. Savile says, with His most Christian Majesty, for refusing her a pass. He has done the same for my Lady Winchester; he says it is only to steal custom. He is very peevish to us now. My Lord Bodmin [son of Lord Radnor, President of the Council, and then Minister at Copenhagen] behaves himself so foolishly he must be called home, it is not imaginable what things he does. My brother has got such praise, I am afraid he will be as proud of it as he was once of his face. If I see him before Saturday, I will write again. He wrote to me that I should, though nobody else did in town. My son has left a note that he shall not stay at all here, and he must soon return to the Hague again. They say there shall be no more underhand dealings to gain Parliament men. The King dined yesterday at my Lord Ossory's. He is not very forward to dine at my Lord of Bedford's. His Lordship turned off a great many great fishes he had bespoke; my son says it is because he would not eat so much."

Lord Bedford, the father of Lord Russell, had the reputation of being a large eater, and was wont to call his good appetite the best friend that he possessed.

"Mr. Waller is very angry with my Lord Cavendish [afterwards the first Duke of Devonshire]. You have reason to be so too. He has not written to his father for above six months, and he is very earnest to have him go down with his wife, for a fortnight, and he cannot be persuaded. Waller does swear and stare that he would have half his estate now, and will not make him a leg for it. His whole business now is to watch where my Lady Betty Felton goes, and to follow her. My Lord Plymouth goes to Tangier, Middleton and Lumley; who more I know not. I thank God our gallant [Lord Eland] is not here. It will be a terrible business if anything. I believe

not many do go. As soon as my Lady Winchester came into the ship, a fellow went to a rope, and by the wind it caught about his neck, and in a minute cut off his head, and it fell down as if it had been done with an axe. I thought this so strange, that it was as fit to be put in my letter as most of it.

“My dear Lord, be a little kind to your poor old, constant, passionate lover of you,

“D. S.

“Pray let me know if this comes to you. My humble service to my lady, and love to Nan.”

The next letter is dated June 20th, but must have been written a few days earlier. Both Sunderland and Henry Sidney, who are here mentioned, went to Althorp from the 15th to the 22nd of June, and there met Lord Halifax, Hyde, and Godolphin. Sidney mentions this in his Journal, and remarks that they gave Lord Halifax so great satisfaction, that he feels sure he will soon join their party.

“What measure soever you take of my kindness and goodwill, I fear, my dear Lord, you cannot but think me impertinent in writing so many letters to you. By this post you will receive my son’s desire to meet you. On Tuesday he intends to go. He says you will, he knows, be well satisfied with what is already done and intended. My brother Harry will go to Althorpe; he longs to see you, he says, and more of your friends. I saw them both yesterday, and they told me so. My son had a sore mouth that vexed him, with the ill news from Tangier, that the fort is taken. Our men must get it back again; a terrible scene, they say, that will be. My Lord Middleton is to go to the Emperor as Envoy. I am told by our ministers, we are assured of his declaring at the Diet, to be in league with us and the Dutch; and my brother says, he does not doubt but by Michaelmas almost all the Princes of Europe will do so too. He says, that from this city did come letters to the States of Holland, to persuade them not to make a league with us, for we were in so ill condition by the divisions amongst ourselves, if they quitted

France for us, they were ruined. This did stagger them awhile. It is certain the Mutineers are out of their wits, and may be ashamed of the lies they have told. Either they have so ill intelligence, that they cannot for that be fit for great undertakings, or too little truth to be so.

“Sir William Jones invited my brother Harry to dinner, and he told him some of the truths he will tell you. The man lifted up his eyes and hands in such a wonder, as if he had been in the Indies! And he tells nothing but what was known from him before, but they said it was all lies and cheat. Now they cannot deny it, they are turning it to ill consequence. Yesterday my brother Smith [Sir Robert Smythe’s younger brother] dined at my Lord Shaftesbury’s and thought him pettish, and out of humour extremely. Mr. Hampden came in before dinner, and said, ‘My Lord, have we a league with the Dutch?’ ‘Yes,’ says my Lord. Says Hampden, ‘This will be all turned against us. We shall have the Prince of Orange with an army here.’ They are so mad, they know not what they say. He whispered to my Lord Shaftesbury, and Smith heard him say, ‘I am afraid this will fool the Parliament.’

“These are good Englishmen and Protestants!”

This Mr. Hampden was the grandson of John Hampden, and, as might be expected, from the traditions of his family, took an active part on the popular side. He was afterwards tried for supposed participation in the Ryehouse Plot. More fortunate than Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney, he escaped with his life, but was condemned to pay the enormous sum of forty thousand pounds, said to be the heaviest fine ever levied by the Court of King’s Bench.

“I have been too long upon politics, considering that you will know more in a few days than I shall do this twelve-month, by those who will tell you true, that I am ashamed I have written so much. I am never better pleased than when I am told these things will be done, that my Lord Halifax will approve; for then I am sure that is good for the nation, and my son being for those ways too, is a satisfaction to me. Tom Pelham and Ned Montague are so out of countenance for the lies they have told me, and not believing

the truths I told them, they believe every word my brother Harry says!

“The King was yesterday here, though the day before there was a Council at Windsor. My Lord President was there and my Lord of Essex.

“My dear Lord, though the length of my letter does not show the great haste I am in, the sense will. I am

“Yours with all the affection you can think,

“D. S.”

The next letter is written in a different frame of mind. Lady Sunderland's satisfaction in Lord Halifax's return to share her son's counsels, and her hopeful view of affairs in general, has been sadly marred by some bitter and unjust things which have been said of her friend in private, and duly reported to her by her son. If there is a thing which she cannot endure patiently, it is to hear those dear to her slandered, and base motives imputed to them in their absence. And so, after her usual generous and impulsive habit, she writes off in hot haste to Halifax, and pours out her indignation on his behalf in the following effusion.

“July 1st.

“I did not intend, my dear Lord, to have troubled you to-day, but I am put into choler at some who ought to be your friends, and if Tom Thynne [a cousin of Lord Halifax] has not more wrong than I believe, he has done the basest thing to you. He particularly, but some others too, have said that you have written letters to them, to assure them that, though there were snares laid for you, they should find you would not be caught. My son says, he does not believe a tittle of it, yet he and Mr. Hyde have been told that Thynne has not only said it, but given out copies of the letters that you wrote to him to this purpose, to several persons. For my part, I believe whoever will give a copy of a friend's letter, will frame it all, and your cousin's reputation between man and man is bad enough for it, I assure you. And so I will tell him that he will be a good while before he is bought off by any place from his mutiny, which he is thought to have

as much mind to, as any mutineer of them all. My son says, he is sure it cannot be. It is neither your style, nor ever was your practice, anything like this to return to your friends, who have desired your company for your personal merit, and for his part, to be near you, whose sincerity and judgement he should sooner rely upon than anybody's; and a proceeding not fair he shall never suspect my Lord Halifax for, and this would not be that. But he thought it was fit to write it to you. It is what they have done to others in a degree. It is something like what Mr. Montague said, when many of his acquaintances were taken into the Council, and he left. A pox on them! if he had thought they would have gone without him, he would never have brought out my Lord Danby's letter.

"They are jealous that you have been invited to Court, and why they should think you did not mean to do as you did, when your occasions in the country did permit your coming, I know not, by anything I have ever heard. They have said a great deal more, as is reported, that you wrote before you went to Althorpe to some here, that you were to go to Althorpe, and your Court friends, several of them, would meet you, but you would be firm against their persuasions. I was so cautious, that I never mentioned your going, till they were gone, suspecting, from the abundance of lies that I have heard, some would be made upon it.

"As to your particular, I have been told, they have said things, by the way of undertaking for you, that I am sure they never had authority from you for: they are mad anybody should be more valued than they. If they do expect to be much sought to, they will, I am told, be mistaken. Their violent running against the Duke will make them do more, because they have done so much. What honours may come I know not, but yet all the several parties of this kind are by all becalled, but my Lord Shaftesbury's followers. I am so vexed to have your name abused by these common cheats, that it has put me out of my little stuff I had to say.

"My son came and dined with me to-day, which he has not done these seven years, because he had no other time, and told me this, believing you might write something to me

of it, upon his letter. It has made me so hot, loving my friend as myself, and if anybody did such a trick to me, I am sure I would never see them more. I reflect now upon little half things, that I have been told, which makes me think part, if not all, is true.

“Sir William Jones has been with the Duke, I hear, I know not for what. He says that my brother’s business could not be determined otherwise than it is, after he had taken so many fees of my brother Leicester.”

The writer is alluding to the old law-suit between her brothers, which had been so long the talk of the town. Halifax and Henry Savile both speak of the quarrels of the Sidney brothers in their letters, and Lady Russell tells her husband that she hears Henry Sidney runs high in his discourse against Lord Leicester, “what a brother so provoked may be induced to do.”

“Your brother and my Lady Scroope,” Lady Sunderland goes on, “came last night. He is gone to Windsor with my son. I shall not have the happiness yet to see his good shape and good face. For one, my Lord Sunderland says, is no bigger than his, and his face never before so good. His dress most decent, and his wisdom—he has brought the Duchess of Portsmouth a great, fine present!”

The size of Henry Savile’s person, and his habitual negligence in his dress, were a frequent subject of merriment amongst his friends. The latter, Halifax himself owns, was a family failing. Fine clothes he confesses were hateful to him, and when his brother had to appear at the wedding of the young Queen of Spain, in clothes worth two hundred pistoles, he remarked—

“I can easily acquit you from the guilt of loving fine clothes for their own sake. It is a crime our family hath very little to answer for, but you must be fine in your public capacity, and for our credit you must give an advantageous pattern of our wealth, by the richness of your embroidery, and of our wit by the choice of your ribbons. Heaven direct you and your tailor so that your poor country may not suffer by you!”

And Henry Savile, in telling Henry Sidney the splendid figure which he cut at the wedding, observes—

“There was nothing more magnificent than the French except the English minister. This may make you laugh, but it makes me cry that I am not in the modest garb of the head of my family—a plain band! Fail not to pity my suffering self, in the midst of all the gaudy fools I shall see for a fortnight!”

The news which the envoy to the French Court had brought with him, was so far satisfactory. Louis XIV. had announced his intention of resting on his laurels for the present, and there was to be no invasion of Flanders this year at all events.

“The King of France,” Lady Sunderland continues, “will be a peaceable prince this summer. Yesterday the judges had orders from King and Council to convict all Papists strictly charged, and not to prosecute the Dissenters from the church of England. This was my Lord Sunderland’s good deed. I told him that I had long been angry with all that would put them into one rank. I was glad my own flesh and blood was of my mind. I heard, at a great meeting of these busy people, they said they had a spy upon them, sent by my Lord of Sunderland. He does protest he sent nobody, nor did he know who they were. The Duke of Buckingham is come off with honour. Blood [an adventurer, who had brought infamous accusations against the Duke] is run away; the others found guilty, and my Lord of Buckingham makes himself sure of £30,000 fine. Mr. Montague does not appear amongst the discontented in public. He is going into France. It is time for me to go from troubling you, that I love so well, as to be very sorry anything should.

“My dear Lord, take all I do in good part, for it is so meant.

“D. S.”

CHAPTER XXV

1680

A French Heiress—Henry Savile's Letters—Court Intrigues and Party Cabals—Shaftesbury and Algernon Sidney.

AFTER writing her letter of the 1st of July, Lady Sunderland, like most impulsive people, began to feel a little alarmed at what she had done, a little fearful how Lord Halifax might receive her vehement denunciation of the would-be friends, who were said to have slandered him. So, only two days afterwards, she wrote again, and began her letter with an apology for her heat in the last.

“ July 3.

“ I ought to ask pardon for being too bold with any that pretend to be friends to my dear Lord Halifax, though I do not think them so, as I doubt I was in my last letter written in choler. But I think, as I did then, that they are liars, and so do your other friends. I have a better subject now—my Lady Scroope's commendation of your son. Of his wit she says great things, of his disposition she believes very well, by all he says of those he should show it best to. For his discretion in marriage, she will undertake you may leave it to him, for he will do himself no hurt in that. There is a Protestant that, he says, is the handsomest woman he ever saw, but she is not rich enough for him. Her portion is not above £8000 English. There is another very rich, that I told your Lordship was spoken of for Spencer. My Lady Scroope had heard it, but she says she is not fit for him; she is eighteen years old. Her mother sent my daughter Sunderland a fan, with diamonds upon the sticks, that cost fifty pistoles.

She had sent her a Japan cabinet. This is Madame de Gouvernet. Your son says, he could be in love, but he can stop it, before it is any trouble to him. My Lady Scroope says she is sure he has no attachment. She says he does very pleasantly rally his uncle with watching his ways, and he is as fond of him as can be. She did not know that he loved play. She says he went his uncle's half two or three times, at my Lady Exeter's, at small ombre, and at the fair for some little trifles, but not else at all."

No subject, Lady Sunderland knew well, could be more acceptable to Lord Halifax than this good report of the son whose character and well-being he watched over with such constant anxiety. His letters to Henry Savile, with whom the young Lord Eland had spent some months in Paris, are full of anxious inquiries about Harry, and directions for his conduct.

"You may be sure," he writes to his brother, "I cannot have any so pleasant thought, as that of hoping he may succeed well in the world. In gratitude to you he ought to make good the character you give of him, and I hope he will do so. I believe he is more apt to be faulty in little circumstances than in great ones, and therefore he must be put in mind that there is a necessary subjection to forms which young men are to submit to, and at the same time it may be very reasonable to laugh at them, it is yet more so to practice them. Little words and motions of respect and civility do often recommend a man more to the company than the knowledge of all the liberal sciences, but the truth is, all good sense hath something of the clown in it, and therefore, though it is not to be suppressed, it must be softened, so as to comply with that great beast, the world, which is too strong for any man, though never so much in the right, to go to cuffs with. I think him so capable of succeeding well in the world, that it is pity he should miscarry by a wrong setting out at first, and therefore pray let us have a care for his launching, for there is the greatest danger for young men in this age."

Both Henry Savile and Algernon Sidney had "an extraordinary opinion" of the youth's character and talents. His

uncle pronounced him the easiest creature to live with that he had ever known, and declared that he had no faults but what became his age; adding that what is gravity at fifty, is dullness at nineteen! Unfortunately this amiable, pliant temper, which endeared young Eland to all, became his ruin. Halifax's fears as to his son's future were only too well founded. "That great beast, the world," proved too much for him, and he fell an easy prey to its gilded bait. A few years later, this promising boy, who at nineteen took such interest in history and politics, who was so affectionate to his grandmother and uncle, and so popular with his friends, had turned out a profligate and spendthrift, and incurred his father's gravest displeasure by his ill-conduct. The French heiress, to whom Lady Sunderland alludes, had already been proposed by Henry Savile as a fitting bride for the Dolphin of Rufford. His own regular attendance at the Huguenot Church of Charenton had won him the respect of the leading Protestant families, who looked upon him as a pillar of the community. Amongst others he had made friends with Madame de Gouvernet, a lady of ancient family and most plentiful fortune, who had a very pretty daughter, Esther, as modestly bred as he had ever seen, with a dowry of two hundred thousand gold crowns. The mother, fearing the persecutions to which the Huguenots were exposed, was anxious to marry her daughter to an English man of quality, and Lord and Lady Sunderland had at one time seriously thought of securing the young woman for their hopeful son, Lord Spencer. The plan, however, had been abandoned.

"Whether," adds Henry Savile, "they think her too old"—she was just eighteen—"or whether, dancing on the tight-rope, they hope for a better fortune in England, or whether they keep him for some minister's daughter, in case of change, to buy their own interest, I will not guess."

The truth was, these ambitious parents had for some time past hoped to win the rich and powerful Lord Arlington's only daughter, Lady Isabella Bennet, the infant heiress of Euston, for their son. But their schemes were disappointed, and this "sweetest, hopefullest, most beautiful child," as Evelyn calls her, was wedded at twelve years old

to the son of the King and the Duchess of Cleveland, the young Duke of Grafton. So far then as the French heiress was concerned, the field was clear for Lord Eland, but Halifax did not altogether relish the idea of a foreign alliance, and told his brother that times were too uncertain and the sky too changeable for early marriages, unless indeed Harry should show a strong liking for the fair young Frenchwoman, which did not appear to be the case. The subject was allowed to drop, but, four years afterwards, Mademoiselle Esther not having yet found a husband, Lord Eland renewed his suit and she became his bride. By all accounts the young lady seems to have been worthy of a better fate. Both Halifax and Henry Savile held her in great esteem, and did their best to protect her from her husband's ill-treatment. Lord Eland and his youngest brother, George, died in 1689, and their father's grief at this double loss drew forth a beautiful letter from Lady Russell, who could never forget the noble and generous efforts which Halifax had made to save her husband. Fortunately, his second son, William, a quiet and well-conducted young man, lived to console him for his bereavement, and proved a more worthy successor to his honours and fortune than his elder brother would have done.

After this allusion to her grandson's prospects, Lady Sunderland proceeds, according to her habit, to give Lord Halifax whatever political news has reached her ears.

Mr. Montague talks now of going next month into France ; he will return, I suppose, as he sees occasion. Some of his company is grown too hot for him. I am told that Sir William Jones does say they cannot bring an impeachment into Hick's hall against the Duke. [Lord Shaftesbury, who was every day growing more reckless, had endeavoured to arraign the Duke of York as a Popish recusant before the Grand Jury of Middlesex. But his plan failed for want of supporters.] At first, there were not so many Lords appeared for the indictment as were named. They do think they have gone too far already to be forgiven. They may take Mr. Howe's saying : to cure the ills they have done they must be

greater, which is their meaning, no doubt. I was told one of them said, 'Oh, that we had my Lord Halifax!' and were asked, for what? 'To be of my Lord Shaftesbury's school, or his retinue, he is fit for either; nobody minds any of them, but as his followers.' Some say the Duchess of York is with child, others that she is melancholy, not for Mrs. Sedley, but greater matters. The Duke appears very thoughtful.

"I have not seen your brother yet; he had good intentions, but they did not come to performance. My Lady Scroope says he is a very discreet minister. The King of France's mistress [Mademoiselle de Fontanges] does not go the journey with him, for a certain infirmity she has, which has cost 2500 pistoles to cure. It is said she is likely to be quitted, but she is a Duchess, with some land belonging to the title, and 22,000 pistoles a year pension, and a vast deal of jewels and plate, and all that belongs to her, greater than any of his women ever had. The ladies of that Court fear nothing so much as the King's growing devout, for he is already so strict as to their conduct, there wants but that to make him as bad as a Spaniard; most to Madame la Dauphine, who has a great deal of wit and knowledge, but she must not show it, but where he pleases. Her husband is a sad creature, he keeps his brother under him like a dog. My Lady Cleveland is scandalous and poor, both to a great degree.

"Here is striving much for my Lord Thanet. My Lord of Bedford would give £12,000. I believe that is true, but I do not what I am told of my Lord of Winchester's orders left here to offer him £20,000. My Lady Henrietta Wentworth bestirs herself, too. They that will give most shall have him, but very little of his money, whatever he has of theirs.

"I am very impatient to hear that your son is quite free from the trouble in his throat, he was not when I heard last. It is extremely painful and dangerous. I will beg of him to have a care of his diet. I know not when you will have Mr. Pierpoint's company. He is grave and reverend, keeps all close. My Lady Scroope is so cautious, she does not know what to do with herself now she is here. That you may have

all blessings, and me that of your kindness, is passionately wished by

“Yours,

“D. S.”

A week later Lady Sunderland writes again, this time with an apology to Lord Halifax for having unknowingly maligned his cousin, Thomas Thynne, by putting words into his mouth which, it appears, he had never spoken. Halifax was evidently of opinion that she had taken the matter too seriously, and begged her not to distress herself with these idle tales.

“*July 8th.*”

“I most humbly beg your pardon, my dear Lord, for being too bold with any relation of yours, but kindness to you is so good a ground, it can hardly produce a fault. My son and I took it in the same way, was angry with those who did endeavour to make a difference, without a thought of your having the least part of it. Some find lies of use to them, and will not give over the practice, though this was told me with some confidence, and I heard it another way, not just so, but something like it. Yet, when I was cool, I did not think Sir Thomas Thynne would do so ill a thing to you.

“As this angered me without having any effect, another, that was taken well, pleases me, but that I believe is true—my Lord Shaftesbury’s and Mr. Algernon’s quarrel, who has heard Shaftesbury say he is a French pensioner and my Lord Sunderland’s spy; he pays him again. This is like to go as high as tongues can.”

Algernon Sidney, it is worthy of notice, indignantly resented the imputation of being in the French King’s pay. The charge, indeed, was so utterly at variance with all we know of his character and conduct in the most critical moments of his life, that it is impossible to believe in its truth. Yet Algernon Sidney’s name appears twice over, as the recipient of the sum of 500 guineas, in the despatches of the French Ambassador, Barillon. That he accepted the French King’s money as a bribe is incredible. That he made use of it to win members to oppose the Court is possible,

but hardly likely. In his letters to Savile he speaks with the utmost contempt of Barillon, whose actions and lying tricks were repeatedly exposed at the English Court, and whose one object, according to Madame de Sevigné, was to enrich himself at his royal master's expense. His own agents were no less unscrupulous, and one of them, Coleman, who was put to death for his intrigues in the Popish Plot, confessed that he had received £2500 from Barillon for the purpose of corrupting members of Parliament, but had spent every penny for his own use. That Barillon held communication with Algernon Sidney, as he did with all the leading members of the Opposition, at the time, is very probable. "M. Sidney," he wrote to his master, "m'a été d'une grande utilité en bien d'occasions. C'est un homme qui a été dans les premières guerres, et qui naturellement est l'ennemi de la cour. On l'a soupçonné depuis quelque temps, de s'être laissé gagner par Milord Sunderland, mais il me paroît toujours avoir les mêmes sentiments, et n'avoir point changé de maximes." And when we recall the whole course of Sidney's life, his stern implacability of conscience, and lofty courage, and when we remember how in the darkest moments he could say, "I have in my life been guilty of many follies, but as I think of no meanness. I will not blot and defile that which is past by endeavouring to provide for the future," it is impossible to condemn him, on the sole evidence of a corrupt and perjured foreign minister.

Lady Sunderland goes on to allude to her brother-in-law, Robert Spencer, whose name is frequently mentioned by his cousin, Lady Russell, in her letters.

"My brother, Spencer, was yesterday in town. He had a mind to see his sister [Margaret, Lady Shaftesbury], and sent to her to meet him at Southampton House [Lord Russell's residence]. He would not go to my Lord Shaftesbury's because of his proceedings against the Duke. My Lord Russell asked him why he would come to his. He might have told him, 'You are but a blind follower!' I was told, my Lord Russell had not been amongst them, but that they did resent the King's putting off dining at my Lord Bedford's as a great affront. Some better heads, perhaps, would not

have taken it so ill, but everybody did wonder the King would do it. Nothing was done at Hicks' Hall, because they did not like the jury; but when they have another, which will be soon, they will prosecute the Duke's indictment. They say they are gone too far to stop. The storm is grown very high within this fortnight, God knows what does encourage them. Serjeant Pemberton is amongst them in their cabals, but not Jones. His Highness smiles, dances, makes love and hunts. There are those in the Court that tell this party things against him every day, that do exasperate them, that the Duke says; whether true or no, I know not.

“My Lady Scroope would stay if she might, yet I think she would be weary. Mr. Savile does not desire to quit France till we have less of the politics and better wine. He is fatter than he was. He says your son is not fat at all; I long to hear of him. I have not heard of the little rogues. If your Lordship has heard lately, pray bid Nan send me word how they do. Mr. Savile goes to Windsor with my son, to-day. I have not seen his Lordship [Sunderland] since he came this time. I may, perhaps, a minute. He is very full of business. Mrs. Middleton and I have lost old Waller. He is gone away frightened. The Duchess of York is not with child. She prays all day almost. She is very melancholy, the women will have it, for Mrs. Sedley. She looks further than that, if she has so much wit, as she is thought by some. My Lord Shaftesbury makes love to my Lady Orrery. She is so well pleased with it, that she is absolutely of his party, and my Lady Betty Felton too. The Duchess of Monmouth is going into France, sick and discontented. These confederates would not make good laws for wives, if they had power! My brother [Algernon Sidney] is suspected to be in with the Duke of Buckingham. To-day he was with Wildman [Major Wildman, one of Cromwell's officers, who had been imprisoned for some years after the Restoration, and was afterwards arrested on suspicion of being implicated in the Rye House Plot]. How far that is a sign of it, I know not, but it is one good, they are not all of a mind! Mr. Montague is not in any affair with them, it is thought, for he does not appear amongst them, and talks of going to

France next month. The King of France sends the Duc de la Trémouille hither with a compliment, and my Lord of Oxford goeth to His Christian Majesty. Mr. Savile is to go, he says, where the King will lead him. He thinks not to war. So says the Secretary [Lord Sunderland]. This minute they are gone from me to Windsor. This was the best news they tell me and no ill.

“My Lord Rochester does appear a real convert. He cannot live, he has ulcers in two places. He sees nobody but his mother, wife, divines, and physicians. I shall live the more easily in my little house with the hopes of seeing you in September. God send you, and all yours well, and as long as I live some kindness, for a little of yours is worth a great deal of mine, though to you it is very real and constant, from
“D. S.”

Wilmot, Lord Rochester, the famous wit and boon companion of Charles II., edified the world by his death-bed conversion. Lady Russell also speaks of him as a mighty penitent, and says that he had actually converted his wife into the bargain. Mrs. Middleton, whom Lady Sunderland mentions as one of her most frequent visitors, was the renowned beauty of Grammont's *Memoirs*, “La Middleton bien faite, blonde et blanche.” Pepys confesses his delight at having “the fair Mrs. Middleton at our church,” and Evelyn, who was related to her father, Sir Robert Needham, speaks of her as “that famous and incomparable beauty.” She seems to have been more virtuous, and less frivolous, than most of the Court beauties. She had great powers of conversation, was fond of oil painting, and herself possessed considerable artistic talents. Grammont, who fell desperately in love with her, complained of the coldness of her manners, and sought in vain to win her heart. Courtin, the French Ambassador before Barillon, was equally fascinated by her charms, and called her the most beautiful and amiable woman he had ever met out of France, while Louvois was so much impressed by his countryman's report, that he sent to England for her portrait. When she died, a few years later, Saint Evremond composed the following epitaph to her memory—

“ Ici gît Middleton, illustre entre les belles,
 Qui de notre commerce a fait les agrémens,
 Elle avait des vertus pour les amis fidèles
 Et des charmes pour les amants.”

Lady Sunderland's next letter was written immediately after the election of the sheriffs for London, an event which excited great consternation in the Court party. Slingsby Bethell, who was re-elected in spite of their strenuous opposition, was known to be a friend of Algernon Sidney's, and a determined Republican in his principles, so much so that even the moderate men on the popular side, such as Lord Russell, shook their heads at his election, and Lady Russell, in a letter to her husband, observes that Bethell has actually dined with Lord Dorset, and professes not to have found courtiers such bugbears as he expected!

“*July 19.*”

“The news of yesterday, everyone in the streets can send you, and better than I, my dear Lord, yet I must be scribbling. At the choosing of the Sheriffs, which are the same again, a loud outcry, ‘No Yorkist! no Papist!’ thus by hundreds, and one proposed they beat so that he is very ill, still crying, ‘A Yorkist, none of him!’ My Lord Russell said he was sorry one of them was chosen, for he was as great a Commonwealth's man as Algernon Sidney. I wonder what his lordship is, if he is not so too, and goes so far towards it. My Lord Shaftesbury says, if the Duke should go away, that is nothing! If he should take the oaths, go to church, receive the sacrament, abjure transubstantiation, that is nothing! They have no reason to fear him, he seems now full of thought. It is time for him and others to be so. That Lord, and, I think, the Duke of Monmouth, dined with Mr. Montague, to rejoice. His Lordship goes out of town to-day, and his Grace soon begins his progress to his friends' houses all over the West. His wife seems desirous to have him make all submission to the King. If she has sincerity, she has no power. One good thing is amongst them. They drive several ways, but the end is still themselves, which keeps them from agreeing. They are very busy at Court. The King, I think, does not go away to-day.

“My Lord Ossory [who had been appointed governor of Tangier in the place of Lord Inchiquin] is put upon demanding more than four thousand men for Tangier. My Lord Shaftesbury says that he is afraid, if he is absent from hence, my son will get his father [the Duke of Ormonde] out of his place of Lieutenant, and himself in. My Lord Inchiquin, when he went to Windsor, sought for my son first, and being told he was upon the Terrace, went thither, and met the King. He kneeled down to kiss his hand. The King turned from him and said, ‘My Lord, I will talk with you in another place.’

“The Duke de la Tremouille, though a sad creature, it seems is thought too good to come to us. A less quality by much is come. The French Ambassador [Barillon] has borrowed everybody’s plate he can get. He never spoke to my Lady Thanet, and he sent for hers. My Lady Scroope is at her brother’s house, and she wishes you were at yours. I think the Papists are not sorry for this storm upon the Duke. They hope it may bring confusion. If they think it will blow over, they will surely be much mistaken. The malice of the busy people goes further than to him. My Lord Macclesfield was reconciled to him yesterday and kissed his hand. Mr. Algernon is busy, about what God knows. Last night he was called out of my chamber; I asked by whom? and my man said, ‘a Quaker.’

“The Duke of Buckingham very lately pretended to have some trouble of conscience, and talked of it to some fanatics, and they said he appeared to be in a good mind, and they were to come to him again to finish the work. At a time appointed he could not be found, and afterwards they heard he was with a wench all that day. I long to see your Lordship most violently, and love and pray for you as well as I can.

“D. S.

“I humbly present my service to my Lady. I fear my little friend has forgot me.”

CHAPTER XXVI

1680

Critical State of Affairs—Lady Sunderland's Anxieties—Letters to Halifax.

LADY SUNDERLAND'S letters, at this time, reflect the growing anxiety of the public mind throughout the summer of 1680. Lord Shaftesbury, becoming every day more reckless, devoted his indomitable energy to stir up popular agitation, both in the town and country. Countless petitions were addressed to the King from different parts of the country, praying for the meeting of Parliament, and were met by counter-addresses from loyal gentlemen, eager to profess their abhorrence of the attacks upon the Court. The whole country was divided into Petitioners and Abhorrrers, and people who, like Lady Sunderland, remembered the beginning of the Civil War, recalled those days with sinking hearts. She talks gloomily of those who have designs that can never be compassed but by the whole nation being in a flame, and adds that she wishes she had no ground for her fears, and that they were only the effect of her spleen. "I am old enough," she says sadly, "to remember the ill consequences of princes being deceived." And although both the King and his ministers tried to put a bold face on the situation, they knew, as well as she did, all its perils, and every garrison throughout the kingdom was warned to prepare for war.

The Duke of Monmouth, relying on the support of Shaftesbury and his followers, openly declared himself the leader of the Protestant party in the coming struggle. He supped with Nell Gwynne, and met his friends at her house,

in open defiance of the King's commands. Finally, as Lady Sunderland had informed Halifax, he went off to the West, on that progress which Dryden afterwards commemorated, in a famous passage of his *Absalom and Achitophel*.

“From east to west his glories he displays ;
And, like the sun, the promised land surveys.
Fame flies before him, as the morning star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar.”

But while, to all appearances, the leaders of the Opposition had things their own way, the tide of popular feeling was slowly turning against them. The cruel persecution of the Roman Catholics, the violent language of Shaftesbury and his crew, were reaping their own reward. The attempt to prosecute the Duke of York, and the boldness with which Monmouth advanced his claims, before long produced a reaction. The idea of setting the crown on the head of a bastard whose illegitimacy the King had publicly owned, to the exclusion of the Duke of York's daughters, repelled the most ardent supporters of the Protestant cause. The country gentlemen, Sir Leoline Jenkins wrote to Henry Sidney, were moved to indignation at the violence of the City, and the old Cavaliers were ready once more to rally round the King. But the state of the country was enough to fill the wisest with alarm. The most disquieting rumours were abroad, and Lady Sunderland could only long for the presence of the one man who, in her eyes, was able to stem the tide. In this frame of mind she wrote the next four letters to Halifax during those anxious summer days.

“July 29th.

“That you have, my dear Lord, but a thought of my seeing sweet Rufford again, gives me a dream of happiness. I believe there will be nothing here suddenly to fright those who have more reason to love life than I have. But it may be brought about with time, and great endeavours of those who have designs that can never be compassed, but by the whole nation being in a flame. I wish I had no ground for this, but that it was only an effect of my spleen. I have told you how my Lord Shaftesbury and Mr. Algernon have

railed at one another. Now messages pass between them, I believe by Mr. Hampden, but that I do not know. The first part he [Algernon Sidney] told me; why, I cannot imagine. He says he does not go to him, because he tells lies of himself and his friends, but he undertakes to know Shaftesbury's mind. He says he professes to have no design for the Duke of Monmouth. Then you may imagine what he pretends to Mr. Bethell to be for!—A Republic! there can be no doubt! I believe they will not be long in masquerade. I hope the King will do a good deal, and I pray God the moderate, honest people may be the greatest number. If not, you are all undone.

“There is little said of religion, or of trying the Lords, because they think all that will be done! [The five Roman Catholic Lords then imprisoned in the Tower, were Lord Stafford, Lord Arundel of Wardour, Lord Powis, Lord Bellasis, and Lord Petre.]

“I am afraid good people will wish they had not been passive, and given the advantage of time so much to the ill ones to act. All this business about the Sheriffs is in order to carry ill things. My Lord Sunderland thought it had been better if they had not been opposed, but the Mayor and Recorder did undertake more than they could do. I am old enough to remember the ill consequences of princes being deceived.

“There is one place of counsel I should never have suspected—my Lady Orrery's! till I did know that my Lord Shaftesbury, Duke of Monmouth, and my Lord Cavendish do meet and sup there, and Mrs. Nelly, who the King had forbid letting the Duke of Monmouth come to her house. To-day my Lady Orrery is gone to Windsor, to furnish for the better diverting them. My Lady Scroope is gone too. After that, to the Bath, and then into Lincolnshire, where she will stay till she sees what the Parliament will do, if her brother [Sir Robert Carr, of Sleaford] leaves his wife there. I find she is not pleased with my son. She thinks, I believe, he is no friend to them, and is too much for complying with the moderate. I do not doubt but that would be the greatest party, if they understood the intentions of others. She told

me he was, at my Lord St. Albans, very peevish to her and Mr. Jermyn [Lord St. Albans' nephew, *le petit Germain* of Grammont's *Memoirs*]. The Papists do now wish a confusion, that is most certain. She says the Duke is very melancholy. I told her he had reason. Your Lordship cannot know truth till you come to town, letters must not tell true.

"At last, my Lady Northumberland will not go into France. She said yesterday, if she did not go next week it would be too late, and she was very lazy. Some poor women are made such fools as to pretend to choose what they cannot help. Her health needs the journey as much as it did. My Lord of Oxford and Mr. Churchill have been very well presented by the French King. To-day the Frenchmen go from hence. The Ambassador brought a coach full of them to Mrs. Middleton's, and sent it to fetch more. They all dined at Mr. Montague's yesterday.

"Woe be to the Duchess of Portsmouth, now the ladies are got into Council! Such stuff as this, I know, is not fit for my Lord Halifax; but at this time there is no better in the empty corner of your old friend that passionately loves you.

"D. S.

"I opened my letter to tell Your Lordship I have seen Sir William Coventry. He is very well. He knows nobody in town, or very few. One with his judgment and honesty, with less spleen, will not like what is done here. My Lord Shaftesbury and the Duke of Monmouth are gone out of town."

The Frenchmen who crowded to the "belle Middleton's" house to see the fair lady, whom the Ambassador had pronounced to be the Queen of English beauty, were the Duc de Nevers, the brother of Madame de Mazarin, her cousin the Grand Prieur Vendôme, the Duc de la Trémouille, and the Maréchal de Créqui. These noblemen, with their respective suites, had been sent to London by Louis XIV. on a special mission to his brother of England.

On the 5th of August Lady Sunderland wrote again—

“I know, my dear Lord, you think me a great fool for writing as I do, but that shall not serve you to be rid of it till I see you. My Lord of Essex tells me you promise to be here the beginning of next month. I long for the time.

“My Lady Scroope is out of her wits. She has grown very violent in her religion, and she says it will not be possible for any of them to live in England. I know not what they are in the country, but here they are enraged. Some of them say the Duke has undone them. Mr. Jermyn did tell my son he [the Duke] had rather be in the hands of the Parliament than the Ministers. He told him *that* desire he would in a very little time have.

“Everybody thinks the Duke of Ormonde will quit the Government of Ireland, or be persuaded to it. My son told me he had, by some, been desired to get it. He said, that if it were worth twice as much as it is, he would not have it. He will not quit the post he is in for any other employment. At the same time he had, it seems, on some occasion offered to answer for you, that you would not have it. My Lord Shaftesbury raves of one of you two going into Ireland. They have made their plot form as well as they can here, and now they are gone to cabal in the country. My Lord Clifford, who was very near Reading, neither went to the Duke of Monmouth, nor sent to him. I believe he is a very moderate person. My Lord Cavendish had taken up money, at fifty and three score pounds in a hundred, to go into France, and he lost a thousand in two nights at Madame Mazarin's. That stops his journey for a time. I suppose you know Sir William Temple is to go Ambassador into Spain.

“My neighbour, my Lady Goodericke, [wife of Sir Henry Goodericke of Ribston, Yorkshire, Envoy to the King of Spain] will not be the gladdest wife in England to have him come home. They say he shall go somewhere else, but this is too good for him. My Lord Thanet is one of the pretenders to be Chamberlain to the Queen, and makes his court in letting one of the bed-chamber women play his money with her Majesty at l'antreleu [loo]. The King, Queen, Duchess of Portsmouth, and my Lord Feversham made a bank of £2000, and they won £2700 of the Frenchmen. The Duke of

Nevers goes away to-day. My Lord Sunderland has not lost. He told me he had heard Judge Weston had not performed the orders he had, to make a distinction between the Papists and the Fanatics. He told them that gave him the information, if anybody would bring proofs of it, he would make the complaint at the Council, and desire to have him put out of his place.

“Your brother and mine [Henry Savile and Henry Sidney] will both meet your Lordship here, I hope. I should be more glad to hear your son [Lord Eland, who had been dangerously ill in France] would do so too. I hear his throat and the fever were very terrible; he has not to me represented it to be so, though it was past when I heard last from him. I was told De Moulin [his tutor] did say it was to a great degree. I know not what patience he has, but he apprehends too little the danger of it. Sir John Pelham has had a very ill fit of the stone, but I thank God he is well again. His father died of it, a little older than he is. His son and daughter-in-law [Tom Pelham and his wife, daughter of Sir William Jones] are come away. My sister has held out very well, though she is a proud, pert, ill-bred creature. I did never know any of her birth fail of these qualifications. My son says my Lord Mulgrave is glad he is come home from Tangier, and he believes no more people of quality will go. It is a sad place, but not in present danger of being lost. I hear Sir Robert Carr shall be a Privy Councillor. The Duke of Buckingham, they say, had a great desire to come to Court; but nobody cares to have him. The Duke of York thinks he has lost the best friend he had, in my Lord Ossory; yet he is generally lamented. My Lord of Essex is a constant councillor. He is in very good humour. Truly I think she [Lady Essex] will die, she is very much wasted in a few months. My dear Lord, I am willing to be impertinent that you may show me kindness in forgiving me, though that is a great rate, yet by me it is valued at much more, who passionately loves you, and esteems you as much as I can any creature.

“ D. S.

“Pray present my humble service to My Lady. My Lady Anne shall soon hear from me.”

“*August 20th.*”

“You have so used me to your letters, my dear Lord, that it makes me fear one or two I wrote have miscarried, or that you do civilly rebuke me for the folly of not being cautious enough in doing it. Yet I have ever considered that if they should be taken, and brought to the Secretary, I could see no other harm. You will wonder, perhaps, that no discourse is so common in everybody’s chamber, and every coffee-house, as of the Duke’s going away before the Parliament, some saying he will, and others that he will not. Upon this, his servants and friends, and they say himself, too, take all occasions to declare that he will not stir, and this is so much done that I do a little wonder at it. I must tell you the temper my Lady Scroope is in, which is so fierce, against whom I will not tell you! But I assure you I dare not contradict her but very little. She admires my Lord of Shaftesbury for the ablest man in the world, and had she been King would never have parted with him, and she loves Sir William Coventry best. What place your Lordship has with her, I know not. If it were a good one I should hear more of it than I do. The present humour is being with my Lady Northumberland, my Lady Hervey and Stanhope [Lady Stanhope was a Percy, sister-in-law to Lady Northumberland], who told me ‘we dine together round’; and my Lady Northumberland is very earnest with her to take lodgings in their square, and they will protect her, and she says she will go anywhere for that, and she acknowledges great obligation to my Lady Northumberland, for she is looking out lodgings for her there. She goes to the Bath on Thursday. What she will do next, I believe she does not know herself. She has charged me with a great deal of compliment from her brother [Sir Robert Carr, who had just been made a Privy Councillor] to my son, though he has written to him, but she is to understand he is a man of parole. My brother [Lord Leicester] is come from Tun-

bridge not well. Mr. Montague and Jones are there now. He looks after his own health, but poor Lady Northumberland! the talk of a cure for her is at an end, and never the journey intended for that. My Lord Cavendish is stopped awhile, he has not only lost all his money, but coach-horses and plate—all he had! My Lord Clifford says he expects his pictures and house will be gone next. The Duchess of Monmouth did begin her journey towards France yesterday. My son came to town last night late, and goes again to-day. My daughter came to christen Mr. Cheek's child [Mr. Cheeke had married Lady Dorothy Sidney, the writer's niece]. There is a great noise of what Mr. Hyde has done at the Mint, by some, but others say he and the men who are come into the office have done nothing but what they can justify, and had caution in what they did. Last night, with great joy, I was told that my brother Robert Spencer was Master of the horse to the Queen, and my Lord Feversham Chamberlain. I sent to my son to know if it were so, and he sent me word it was not, yet he did not know what might be. He is never from *Her* [the Duchess of Portsmouth]. I hope he will charm her Majesty into a consent. I heard my Lord Chesterfield would have been her Chamberlain. If Robin gets it, there will be one happy man in England.

“I am very glad your son is very well. I had a letter from him yesterday, but not the time mentioned in it for his coming home directly. I suppose he attends some command from you, without which he will not travel in the heat. That will not be long now. My Lady Scroope talks much of the contempt the French have for all strangers. She, without intending it, makes the most foolish thing that ever I heard of them. Mr. Hyde is going to the Bath. Mr. Pierpoint goes on Thursday to fetch his wife home. I could not tell him when you would be here. I know not if he goes to you or no. I am glad Lady Betty has but the chicken pox. I doubt not but my Lady has good advice. There needs purging after, to keep the other from following. If Your Lordship were in my corner, I should find something would do my spleen good, which appears now past cure or mending.

God send us a happy meeting, and to you every good thing.

“ D. S.”

One more letter to Halifax remains to us from Lady Sunderland's pen, but unfortunately it is the last of this most interesting series. It was written on the 24th of August, about three weeks before Halifax came to town. She herself was ill and out of spirits, and the weather had turned very wet and rainy. She had not heard from Halifax, and has little news to give him. But her affection for her friend is as warm, and her hopes of soon seeing him again are as strong as ever.

“August 24th.

“ I have, my dear Lord, wondered, and am now troubled that I do not hear from you. The best I hope is that my letters are fallen into some other hands, for my follies can be no prejudice to you, and to myself I can have no effect so ill as your dislike. If I have written with too little caution sometimes, you may be sure it was well meant, and if you had given me the least rebuke, I had mended my innocence to the most perfect degree, and my inconsiderableness to the last keeps me from thinking the lying spirit that now reigns has condescended to do me any ill office. I have a great deal of spleen at this time, which, perhaps, works too high for my quiet. The least thing from you that looks unkind or displeased strikes me in the tenderest part of my heart. I will trouble you no more with this subject. My son and his wife, without any company, went to Althorpe yesterday, and on Wednesday they intended to come in a day hither. I believe it will be impossible. There was a council at Windsor on Wednesday. My Lord Inchiquin was to be heard. My Lady Thanet told me, last night, his friends had not heard what the result was. My brother is in great hope of being Master of the Horse to the Queen, but I find others doubt it more. Two Earls, as they say, pretending to be Chamberlain, it is thought the Queen will not remove Lord Feversham, but rather choose to have two Earls than a poor gentleman. The

King and Queen have spoke of Robin, and my Lord Clarendon does promise to do all he can. That is more than both. My Lord Cavendish, at last, is gone into France. He recruited his losses at play with more borrowing, at fifty and sixty in the hundred.

“This wet weather has not driven everybody from the Wells. Sir Carr Scroope is there in no good condition. He carried a physician of his own. He has reason to fear so much pain as he is threatened with. Sir Jones is there too, and Mr. Montague, two great friends. If Jones is wise and obstinate, sure Montague cannot have so great a power over him as many believe. My Lady Scroope is gone to the Bath, and Mr. Hyde does go. The King did part very kindly with the Duchess of Monmouth. She fell into a great passion of tears, as soon as his back was turned, and he returned to her again, and took her in his arms. He has given her, they say, £5000 for her journey. She took her leave of the Queen, but not of the Duchess of York. Her husband uses her barbarously. If there is not a better understanding between them than appears, she seems to dislike all he does as much as possible.

“My brother, Leicester, kept a great house at Boundes. My Lord Vaughan, Sir Carr, my son and his wife and child and all that belonged to them, at his charge.”

Lord Leicester had apparently either rented Boundes, or been allowed the use of the house by Lady Sunderland's son, Sir Robert Smythe, who, with his wife and child, were among his guests. He himself had been drinking the waters at Tunbridge Wells, and was not at present living at Penshurst. Lord Vaughan, who was also one of the party, was the elder son of Lord Carbery, and the brother of Lady Russell's first husband. Two years afterwards, he married Lady Sunderland's favourite grandchild, Nan Savile. The writer continues—

“I hear Sir Henry Goodricke will be in great disorder for being recalled, by his fortune being in very ill condition. Yet he has lived the worst there that ever I heard of anybody in such an employment. My Lord of Winchester does make

a great bustle. He borrowed a house to entertain a great many ladies. My friend was not of the party. It was for some days. If I had better stuff, your Lordship should not have this from me, who thinks you deserve the best of everything, and would, if I had power, give it you, as I passionately love you.

“D. S.

“I am so ill I cannot write to Nan.”

CHAPTER XXVII

1680

Halifax returns to Town—Henry Sidney's Diary—The Exclusion Bill—
Attacks upon Halifax—Lady Sunderland's last Letters.

THE hope expressed by Lady Sunderland, that Lord Halifax would meet both his brother and her own in town, was soon fulfilled. Henry Savile, to his great satisfaction, obtained leave to return to England as soon as the French King's progress along his northern frontier was ended. This part of his Court duties was by no means to his taste, and he draws a pathetic picture of his sufferings in lodgings, where he is exposed to whole armies of flies, fleas, gnats, and such humble enemies, and where his fifteen horses are left standing in the rain, for want of a stable. At length, however, the horrors of this tiresome journey were over, and, much to his relief, he had seen Louis safely back at Versailles. So he hurried across the Channel, and reached London the same week that Henry Sidney landed there on his arrival from the Hague. On the 13th of September he kissed hands at Windsor, on his appointment as Vice-Chamberlain, and on the 17th, Halifax, true to the resolve which he had long ago announced to his friends, came to town.

"Lord Halifax," wrote Lady Russell to her husband, "came to town on Thursday, and next morning his coach stood at Sir Thomas Chicheley's. The town says he is to hear all sides, and then choose wisely. He kissed the Duchess's hand last night, and she is gone this morning to tell the news at Newmarket."

Henry Savile stayed in town a few days longer, on purpose

to see his brother, after which he was forced to hurry back to his post, but Henry Sidney remained in England, by Lord Sunderland's express desire, for the meeting of Parliament. How busily his days were spent we learn from his carefully-kept Diary. He is constantly rushing from place to place, now with the ministers in town, then with the Duchess of Portsmouth at Newmarket. On Sunday he goes to church with Lady Sunderland at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and hears his friend, Dr. Burnet, preach the sermon. He dines at Montague House, sups with Lord Sunderland at his house, meets his brother, Algernon, whom Sunderland is eager to conciliate, talks over affairs with the Duke of Monmouth, visits all the ministers in turn, and ends by spending the evening with Lord Shaftesbury. And he never fails to write to the Prince of Orange, and give him a full and particular report of the situation.

Sunderland had confided all his plans to him from the first. He had deliberately resolved to sacrifice the Duke of York, and propitiate the country by passing the Bill of Exclusion. But, for fear Monmouth should be recognized as the King's heir and successor, he was anxious that the Prince of Orange should come over and claim the succession in right of his wife. This was the deeply-laid plot, which Sunderland and his friends discussed secretly in all their conferences. Sidney was employed to find out the intentions of the popular party, and win their leaders to make common cause with the Secretary. But there was one man who could neither be bribed nor frightened into agreement. Lord Halifax steadily refused to support the Bill. The Exclusion of the Duke was, in his eyes, contrary to the constitution, and an offence against the crown, which, in the present state of feeling, would lead to a civil war. He was just as anxious as his colleagues to secure the Prince of Orange's rights, but would not sanction any departure from the natural line of succession. In vain his brother-in-law and uncle argued with him. In vain Sunderland and Sidney used all their powers of persuasion. "Lord Halifax," wrote Sidney in his Diary, "is still of the same mind."

On the 13th October, Henry Sidney writes: "There was a

great debate in Council what should be done with the Duke. Some were for his going away, others for his staying till 'twas seen what the Parliament would do, and others were for the King's sticking to him. It was carried that he should not go. We were mightily out of humour, and thought our matters would go ill."

Lord Sunderland, however, told the Duke plainly, that he must leave town before Parliament met, and on the 16th of October, it was decided at an extraordinary meeting of the Council, that the King should send his brother to Scotland.

Three days afterwards, the Duke went away, and on the 21st Parliament met. On the 25th Lord Russell moved the Duke's exclusion from the succession, after a villainous attempt had been made to blacken James's character by a well-known perjurer, Dangerfield, who appeared at the bar of the House, and accused him of plotting against the King's life. On this occasion Sidney not only voted, but spoke in favour of the Exclusion Bill, much to his Royal master's indignation.

"I asked the King his commands," he writes on the 28th, "upon which he immediately fell upon the proceedings in Parliament, with great heat. Everybody unsatisfied with him. At night we met in my Lord Sunderland's chamber and talked about the Prince's coming over."

On the 31st, it was decided that Sidney should return to the Hague and urge on the Prince of Orange the importance of coming over at once. Accordingly, after paying a farewell visit to the Duchess of Portsmouth that evening, he embarked for Holland. The Prince, however, was resolute in his refusal to come to England, and certain that his presence at this critical moment would be prejudicial to his own interests, and ruin him in the eyes both of the King and Duke of York. On the 7th of November, the Exclusion Bill passed the House of Commons by a large majority, and the next day Lord Sunderland's wife wrote to Sidney, passionately entreating the Prince to come without delay. She adds: "If not, 'tis the Duke of Monmouth must be the King, and if the Prince thinks it is not worth going over a threshold for a

kingdom, I know not why he should expect anybody should for him. The case is much changed since you were here, and a day's loss of his being here, for aught I know, may make it for ever useless to the Prince. Therefore, as he pleases. I will admit of no more *ifs* and *ands*. I would willingly go further than Holland to tell you my whole mind on this matter, because I wish you mighty well, and fancy if you could but see all that is to be seen, the Prince would not be such an ass, and so farewell."

A few days afterwards, the Exclusion Bill was taken up to the House of Lords by Russell, "with a mighty shout," which made many present think of "'41," and tremble lest they were about to witness another great tragedy. Then it was that Lord Halifax, deserted by all his colleagues, dared alone to resist the popular clamour, and lift up his voice in the name of honour, of justice, and of reason. His surpassing eloquence on that memorable occasion was never forgotten. Far on in the next century, grey-headed men quoted his speeches as masterpieces of oratory, unequalled in parliamentary annals. In the words of one who was present that day, he did "outdo himself and every other man." "The fourteenth of November," wrote Sir John Reresby, "was one of the greatest days ever known in the House of Lords. As the matter was extraordinary—*i.e.* the cutting off the lineal descent of the Crown—so also was the debate. There was a great party for the passing, and great speakers, of which the chief was the Earl of Shaftesbury. The chief manager against it was Lord Halifax. Having a great deal of wit, judgement, and eloquence, he made so fine and powerful a defence, that he alone, for so all confessed, persuaded the whole House.

The impassioned earnestness of the speaker, the silvery tones of that clear voice carried conviction with them, and after the debate had lasted ten hours, the Bill was thrown out, by sixty-three to thirty.

The fury of the defeated party knew no bounds.

"All things are coming to the last confusion," wrote Anne, Lady Sunderland, to her friend, Henry Sidney. "The King acts as if he were mad. The Bill was yesterday cast out

of the Lords' House, and our friend is in great disgrace for giving his vote for the Bill. At present Lord Halifax is the King's favourite, and hated more than ever the Lord Treasurer was, and has really deserved it; for he has undone all."

Halifax himself was perfectly well aware of the tumult he had raised, and the very day after the great debate, he found time to send his brother a few lines, in which he observes—

"Our world here is so heated, that you must not be surprised though you should hear I am in the disfavour of those from whom I have never yet deserved ill. If innocence can be a protection, you need never be in pain."

The storm he had prophesied was soon to burst. Three days afterwards, the angry Commons addressed a petition to the King, praying His Majesty to remove Lord Halifax from the Council, as a promoter of Popery.

On the 19th of November, Dorothy, Lady Sunderland, wrote to her brother, full of generous indignation on behalf of her noble friend. Her heart, as might be expected, was deeply stirred by the stormy scenes in Parliament, and she is full of concern at the dangers to which he is exposed, full of admiration for his serene and dauntless bearing.

"Nov. 19th.

"If I should not write, you having bid me do it, you might think me sick, or more disturbed than I am, though I confess I am a good deal, that my friends cannot go together in one great point. I am full of my Lord Halifax, and will tell you what perhaps nobody else will—that, a day or two before the Duke's bill was carried to the Lords, one of the great actors came to him as a friend, I suppose, to tell him if he did speak against it, he would be impeached by the House of Commons, or an address made to the King to remove him from his great place of Privy Councillor. He answered, neither threatenings nor promises should hinder him from speaking his mind. How he did it, you who know him may judge.

"It is a point, he says, he has studied more than ever he did any, and would have been glad if he could have gone the popular and safe way. He had company enough with him,

but my Lord of Shaftesbury and Mr. Montague have singled him out of the herd of sixty-three that were of his mind, to desire to remove him from the King, having given no reason yet but that common fame said he had been for proroguing the Parliament, and having very great parts, which made him the more dangerous. Your friend, Mr. Herbert, said, 'Other Lords had been of the mind for Parliaments, but they had given satisfaction.' It was begun by Montague. And what followed, showed it to be so perfectly malice, that it made ninety-eight for him. A great many went out, four-score they say, and one hundred-and-nineteen were for the address. What they will put in it, I know not. They must go to their invention.

"As he came out of the Lords' House, he was told that the House of Commons was upon this debate, which was very long. He said he would go home to dinner. He did not speak with one man, because they should not say he was making friends, and so he did. In the afternoon his house was full of House of Commons' men.

"My son was there at one time—that is the thorn in my side,—though in everything else they agree. But it cannot be as I would have it, so long as my son is well with Lord Shaftesbury.

"Halifax has desired the King to let him go—they will come much nearer to His Majesty's concern than my Lord Halifax. My nephew Pelham votes for him, Sir William Jones against him, but did not speak. In short, he says he will speak his mind, and not be hanged so long as there is law in England.

"I am not well—pardon this narrative. I were a beast if I were not concerned for so perfect and constant a good friend. You shall soon hear from me again. I love you with all my heart.

"D. S."

A week later she wrote again, still full of the one subject, still warm for Lord Halifax, and burning with indignation against his enemies. But the worst is over, and she can rejoice in the failure of their efforts, and in the King's resolve to stand by his faithful servant.

“November 25.

“You may perhaps hear from me some little truths that others have not leisure to write. I believe I was warm when I wrote last with the malice to my Lord Halifax. My son told me that they did repent it, and were ashamed of it, but more than that, Tom Pelham, who must be violent or not live with father Jones, told me the major part of the House was ashamed and sorry for it, but would not venture their credit for what they were indifferent to. So they went with the address, and yesterday the King sent them word, My Lord Halifax was of his Council, and he did know no reason why he should not be. If they did, the law was open and the Parliament sitting, and they might proceed. How they took the encouragement I know not. 'Tis an answer as new as the charge, which Tom Pelham owns to be without precedent. I name him because of the way he goes. I could tell a hundred other things. My Lord Cavendish desired them to let one alone they had nothing against for those they had. My Lord Shaftesbury disowns having anything to do in it, and my Lord Russell. I heard 'twas Montague and the two lawyers, Jones and Winnington, who show their profession. I wish with all my heart the Bill had passed, that they might not make that excuse of doing nothing for the King. But I fear that it will soon appear that those persons who have now most power would leave the King none. Some think theirs will not be very lasting. My Lord Shaftesbury says, he does no more understand the House of Commons than he does the Court. He does lose ground. Montague was so ashamed he did not say one word, when the second debate was, about carrying the address against my Lord Halifax, or laying it aside.

“By a mistake of a figure in a note, the first day, I writ you a lie; no less than a hundred less against him than there was. There was less difference the last time. If they say any more, he is ready to answer for himself. I tell him, he would be talking. I believe it will do him good in the general, it was so malicious. One asked, what shall we charge him with? Montague said: ‘With being an enemy to his King and Country.’ Winnington said: ‘Let us take heed of that;’

we cannot prove it.' Mr. Herbert's testimony, that some Lords were penitent and gave ample satisfaction, pleased nobody.

"Yesterday, the Duchess of Portsmouth went in her own coach with my Lady Sunderland, Lady Newport, and Mrs. Crofts, to dine with our cousin Cheeke in the Tower. She may go where she will now she is a favourite of the House of Commons. She dined at my son's a few days ago, and after dinner the King came in, as he used to do. I hope he is not angry. A great many who differ from my Lord Halifax as to the Bill, say few besides him that come within Whitehall, could decide the House at this time. They are now upon Seymour. My Lord Shaftesbury has laid down his design to divorce the King. He said, he found it would not do.

"My dear Mr. Sidney, take this ugly scribble in good part. 'Tis so dark, though at noon, that I can neither see nor feel. Some things lie heavy at my heart. If you were in my corner you should know all my secrets. I durst trust you and love you very well.

"D. S."

While Lady Sunderland and his friends marvelled at his intrepid conduct, while Reresby and a little knot of admirers looked upon him as the hero of the hour, Halifax himself was moralizing to his brother in his favourite vein of mingled jest and earnestness.

"You will before this have one of mine, which giveth you some account of my late preferment in the House of Commons, who were pleased to make me a man of more importance than I am, the better to entitle me to the honour of being addressed against. . . . You will, I am sure, give me some kind of credit, when I tell you I am not such a volunteer in philosophy as to provoke such a storm as hath fallen upon me, from a mistaken principle of bravery, to do a thing only because it is dangerous. But when, upon inquiry, I think myself in the right, I confess I have an obstinate kind of morality which I hope may make amends for my want of devotion. Where all this will end, either in relation to my-

self or to the public, God in heaven only knoweth. I am at this hour threatened with more thunder from the House of Commons to-morrow. Whether it will be so, or in what manner, I do not yet know ; but where there is private anger, there is reason to expect the worst, for which I have recourse still to my small philosophy, and have not only the comfort of innocence to support me, but the impossibility of avoiding any strokes of this kind, without such indecencies—to use no worse term—as I never digest, and though I agree with you, this is not an age for a man to follow the strict morality of better times, yet sure mankind is not yet so debased, but that there will ever be found some few men who will scorn to join in concert with the public voice, when it is not well grounded, and even the popular fury which may now blow in my face, will perhaps with a little patience not only abate, but turn against these very men that now appear against me.”

He had, as he very well knew, further incensed the popular party, by giving his vote in favour of Lord Stafford, who was brought to trial on the 30th of November, and condemned, on the false evidence of such perjured witnesses as Oates, Dugdale, and Turberville.

Even Harry Savile blamed his brother for opposing the popular feeling in this matter, and warned him seriously of the risks to which he had exposed himself by his courageous action. But Halifax replied calmly—

“If I could talk with you, I should have little doubt of convincing you in the matter of my Lord of Stafford, in which I see you are possessed by the powerful majority, which is not at all times found to be in the right. A man must never hope a pardon for small sins, if he will digest great ones, and where blood is in the case there is not, or at least ought not to be, any room for prudence. That an honest man is a very scurvy calling, I agree with you, but having used it so long, I do not know how to change. Though I cannot absolutely agree to your prescriptions of a lesser morality, in things that relate to the public, yet I am enough convinced, and was so before my late experiences, that there is a good deal of hazard in opposing the torrent of the House of Commons. But, on the other side, it being the only

definition of an honest man to be a lover of justice with all its inconveniences, I do not very well know how things of this kind are to be avoided, but by such means as would lie heavier upon me than all the votes or addresses an angry Parliament can throw upon me."

It was a critical moment for him and for England. "Some things lie heavy on my heart," Lady Sunderland had written, and other minds besides hers were full of dark forebodings. A comet, or, as Henry Sidney calls it, a blazing star, appeared in the heavens, and struck terror into many hearts. Evelyn describes how, looking out of his window on the night of twelfth of December, he saw in the west "a meteor of an obscure bright colour, very much in shape like the blade of a sword, the rest of the sky very serene and clear. What this may portend God only knows! But such another phenomenon I remember to have seen in 1640 about the trial of the great Earl of Strafford, preceding the bloody rebellion. I pray God avert His judgements!"

Before the month was over, the virtuous and innocent Lord Stafford had died on the scaffold, a victim to the blind rage of popular prejudice, and no one knew who the next victim might be. Even Halifax shook his head and spoke to his friend, Sir John Reresby, of civil war as imminent. "Well, if it comes to a war," he said, "you and I must go together." "I told him," adds Sir John, "that I would follow him to death."

But the King was as unconcerned, as thoughtless as ever. A day or two before Lord Stafford's execution, the same gentleman assisted at the royal *coucher*. He found Charles, to his surprise, quite free from care or trouble, and in a very good humour, laughing and talking for two full hours, as he put off his clothes, of the fallacy of those among his subjects who pretended to a fuller measure of sanctity than their neighbours, and declaring that "the most devout generally proved themselves the greatest knaves."

CHAPTER XXVIII

1680—1684

Triumph of Halifax—Fall of Sunderland—The Ryehouse Plot—Death of Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney—Death of Dorothy, Lady Sunderland.

THE thunder of the House of Commons resulted, as Halifax had expected, in another vote, praying the King to remove him and other Privy Councillors who were known to be his supporters. Halifax once more begged the King's leave to resign, but Charles, to do him credit, was this time determined to stand by his one loyal minister. He replied by dissolving Parliament, and calling a new one to meet on the 21st of March at Oxford. At the same time, he dismissed Sunderland from office, and Essex and Temple from their seats in the Council.

"I don't doubt but you'll be very sorry," wrote Anne, Lady Sunderland, to her friend at the Hague, "when you hear my Lord is to so great a degree in the King's disfavour that he has not only turned us out, but without letting us have the money my Lord paid for it, which is a sort of hardship nobody has suffered from His Majesty but us." And, she adds bitterly, "this is all Lord Halifax's doing." But, after her wont, she consoles herself in turning to household matters, and writes a postscript in which she begs Sidney to send her all sorts of ducks and wild-fowl, this spring, and, if he can, some eggs, done up in bran, for then they will keep three weeks. "Now don't laugh at me," she adds, "for being so silly as to think of such things when we are on the point of ruin."

And Sunderland's old college friend, Mr. Penn, hearing of the once powerful minister's downfall, on his way to his newly-granted province in America, moralized, in a letter to Henry Sidney, over the fickleness of fortune and the truth of the Psalmist's saying, "Put not thy trust in princes." "'Tis a pretty thing to see how finely the great monarchs of the world play at ninepins with their ministers, destroy their creatures that they may create again."

Halifax, meanwhile, sought a brief breathing-time at his beloved Rufford, and then returned to face the angry Commons. But he had already won the day. The Parliament which met at Oxford was dissolved by the King after a week's sitting, and to his surprise he found himself relieved from his worst fears. The King refused to let him go, and all he had to complain of was, that he would be kept in town and lose the pleasure of being in the country, "when the rain had made it so delicious." His influence at Court was greater than it had ever been before. He was generally recognized as the rising favourite, and new honours were heaped upon him.

Lady Sunderland, for her part, must have looked with strangely-mingled feelings on her son's disgrace, and the triumph of her noble friend. But her letters end here. We long in vain to know her impressions of the different events which followed, to hear her rejoice in the brilliant career of her "perfect and constant good friend," and sigh a little over her son's sudden reverse of fortune. We would give much for some more of those bright and interesting letters, those effusions that flow so naturally and easily from her pen, and are so full of vivid and lively details, about the people and events that were passing round her. But the record is ended and the book closed. Whether the pains she speaks of as troubling her old limbs mightily, grew worse, and the pen dropped from her hand, whether she fell ill and could write no more, or whether the later letters have perished with so many others of her earlier days, we cannot tell. But from the close of the year 1680, until her death, more than three years later, we do not find a single letter from her pen, nor, what is even more remarkable, a single mention of her name in contemporary records.

Sacharissa passes out of sight and is forgotten. Yet those three years which remained to her of life were stirring and eventful ones both for the Court and nation, years too which brought a chequered tale of weal and woe to many of the men and women whose names figure in her letters.

She saw her son-in-law rise to the highest offices of state, and enjoy the King's confidence. In 1682, Halifax became Lord Privy Seal, and was advanced to the dignity of a Marquis. And the same year she saw his daughter, Lady Anne Savile, the dear Nan of the letters, happily married to an intimate friend and supporter of her father's, Lord Vaughan.

Her own son's disgrace only proved temporary. Before that summer was over, Sunderland had returned to Court. In July 1682, the King's favourite minister was restored to favour by the good offices of the Duchess of Portsmouth, whose friendship he had always sedulously cultivated, and came back to play his double game with all his old skill and cunning.

Henry Sidney's disgrace followed closely on that of his friends', as might have been expected after the share he had taken in the Exclusion Bill. He was recalled in June 1680 from his post at the Hague. But the Prince of Orange, who had the highest opinion of his abilities, and was in after years to advance him to high honours, at once gave him the command of the British troops in Holland, and lost no opportunity of showing the confidence which he placed in him. Henry Savile shared in his brother's good fortune, and, in 1682, was appointed to an important post in the Admiralty which he had long coveted. He was less fortunate in his matrimonial schemes, and the widowed Duchess of Albemarle, to whose hand he aspired, and whose large fortune he coveted, was carried off by his old rival, Ralph Montague, after the death of his first wife, Lady Northumberland. "How came Montague to gain the widow from Savile?" is one of the questions asked in the *Queries and Answers from Garraway's Coffee-house Poems*, that were published in the collection of *State Poems of the Seventeenth Century*. Answer: "The one was witty in going to bed, the

other wiser in cutting the bell-rope." He soon consoled himself, and to the last remained gay Harry Savile, the wittiest of letter-writers and most genial of companions.

In those last years of her life, Lady Sunderland witnessed the complete change which passed over the national feeling. She saw, and there can be no doubt rejoiced to see, the sudden fit of loyalty with which the nation was seized, the way in which the country gentlemen and the Church rallied round the Crown. She saw the Duke of York return to Court, and heard his rights publicly affirmed by the solemn declaration of the Universities. And she saw, too, the ruin of the dreaded popular leaders, and the disgrace of the very men whose insolence had been the most unbounded in their hour of triumph. Monmouth fled for his life to Holland, and Shaftesbury, after being arrested and sent to the Tower, finally died in exile. But among the victims of this new Tory reaction, there were others who were nearer and dearer to her heart.

In June 1683, the discovery of the Ryehouse Plot, a conspiracy of desperate men to murder the King, afforded an excuse for the arrest of the leading Whigs. Lord Essex, seized with a fit of depression, cut his throat in the Tower, and a month afterwards Lord Russell was beheaded in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Halifax had tried with all his might to save his old enemy, and on the scaffold Russell charged Dr. Tillotson with a last message of thanks for his unavailing efforts, while to her dying day Lady Russell never forgot the deep debt of gratitude she owed him. This dark tragedy must have filled Lady Sunderland's kind heart with grief and dismay, but before the tears which she shed for her cousin's husband were dried, her own brother had followed him to the scaffold. Algernon Sidney had been arrested on the 26th of June. After many months of dreary imprisonment in the Tower, he was at length brought to his trial, on the 7th of November, before the infamous Judge Jefferies, and condemned on the evidence of one of the basest and most worthless of men, Lord Howard of Escrick. His own nephew, Lord Sunderland, who was again Secretary of State did not stretch out a hand to save him, and once more

Halifax pleaded alone in the cause of justice and mercy. He himself presented Sidney's petition to the King, and used all his personal influence with Charles on his behalf. But his prayer was again in vain.

Jefferies told the King that either Sidney or he himself must die, and on the 7th of December the patriot was beheaded on Tower Hill. The heroic fortitude with which he met his end has been often described.

"Are you ready, sir? Will you rise again?" asked the headsman, as with a smile Algernon Sidney laid his head on the block.

"Not till the general resurrection. Strike on," was the reply, and the fatal blow fell which ended his life. The next day his body was taken by the servants of his brother, Lord Leicester, to Penshurst, and buried in the family vault. To his sister Dorothy, with her strong family affections and unshaken loyalty, the blow was a heavy one. It was hard to see her brother doomed to a traitor's death, by the son of the King in whose cause her husband had laid down his life. Her tender heart must have suffered keenly, and the shock may well have hastened her end. But at least she had the comfort of her son-in-law's presence and sympathy through all those sad days. Her perfect and constant good friend stood by her to the last. She only survived her brother about three months. Of her last illness and death we hear nothing. All we know is, that on the 25th of February, 1684, she was buried in the chapel of the Spencers, in Brington Church, where the heart of the young Earl of Sunderland had been laid more than forty years before. The following entry in the parish registers records her burial.

"The Right Honoured Dorothy, Countess Dowager of Sunderland, was buried, February the 25th, in linnen for which the forfeiture was paide, and the one half thereof distributed to the poore in due time, according to the late Act of Parliament for burying in woollen."

In that chapel at Brington the Spencers of by-gone generations sleep, each in his own order. There, resting under stately marble canopies, we may see their effigies, knight and

baron, lord and lady, clad in splendid armour or richly-embroidered robes, with their ermine-trimmed mantles, their jewelled necklets and chains of gold, wrought with all the skill of the sculptor's art. Many a long inscription records their names and titles. Their armorial bearings are emblazoned on the walls about them, but, among all this pomp of heraldry, we look in vain for some memorial of the first Earl and Countess of Sunderland. No stone marks their resting-place, no epitaph records their names. But it is enough to know that Sacharissa sleeps here, in this home connected with the romance of her early years, and the short-lived dreams of her young married life. After all the storms and the changes of her troubled life, she could find no better resting-place than the quiet Northamptonshire church on the green hillside, above the wooded slopes of Althorp.

Looking back upon Dorothy Sidney's life as a whole, we are more than ever impressed by the singular goodness and beauty of her character. Whether as daughter and sister, wife, mother, or friend, she is always the same, always good and true, always loyal to the call of duty, always kindly and generous, and above all, always faithful and unchanging in her affections. In an age when scandal was rife, at a Court where few could escape suspicion, no breath of reproach ever touched her pure and spotless name. She deserves to rank with Rachel Russell and Margaret Godolphin, among the best and noblest women of the Restoration. Her lot was cast in troublous times, and not even her beauty nor her virtue could save her from Fate's hardest blows, but in spite of these she had her full share of the best life has to give.

In youth and age alike, she was admired and loved by many, and, better still, she loved as few know how to love. And when the best days of life were over, and she had lost all that made it most precious, she still kept her freshness of heart, that strong capacity for loving others and winning their love, which is the secret of perpetual youth. In the spring-time of her loveliness a great artist painted her portrait, and a distinguished poet sang her charms. In middle age she still had her adorers, and was held by many to be the finest lady of her times. And in the next century, long after her

death, her memory was fondly cherished by old men who had known her in her prime, and her name lived on as the ideal of all that was excellent in women. The writer in the *Tatler* of 1709, lamenting, as old men will, the decay of breeding and manners in the maidens of the day, stops to heave a sigh, and grows pathetic while he recalls the grace and beauty of Sacharissa, as he remembered her, in the far-off days of his youth, "when all the world repeated the poems she inspired."

Many will think it no small thing to have been painted by Vandyke's hand, and sung by Waller's lute. A few, it may be, will count it even more to have been the wife of Sunderland and the friend of Halifax.

INDEX

- ALBEMARLE, DUCHESS OF, 303
 Alibonc, 89, 96, 99
 Althorp, 38, 71, 72, 89, 92, 96, 97,
 101, 124, 125, 126, 131, 133, 136,
 137, 168, 187, 188, 217, 257, 258,
 263, 266, 288, 306
 Amersham, 31, 202
 Anne, Queen, 174, 175
 Antrobus, Mr., 120, 127, 128
 Ashford, 132, 166
 Augiers, M., 52, 54
- Barillon, 174, 216, 274-277, 279
 Baynard's Castle, 10-13, 16, 17
 Beaconsfield, 31
 Bedford, Earls of, 96, 262, 273
 Bedford House, 239
 Bellasis, Lord, 252, 282
 Bramber, 201, 202, 206, 222,
 Braughton, Mrs., 33
 Brington, 71, 305, 306
 Bristol, 93, 94, 96
 Bristol, Earl of, 173, 174
 Boscawen, Mrs., 138, 139
 Boundes, Great, 17, 131, 132, 137-
 139, 141, 289
 Buckingham, Dukes of, 3, 255, 268,
 279
 Burnet, Bishop, 208, 228, 292
- Carlisle, James, Earl of, 15, 16, 44
 Carlisle, Lucy, Countess of, 14, 15,
 32, 44, 52, 59, 61, 70, 76, 83, 115,
 164
 Carr, Lady Anne, 48, 56
 Carr, Sir Robert, 285, 286
 Cart, Dorothy, 166
 Cart, Joseph, 165, 166
 Cart, Lady Anne, 157, 158, 165,
 166
 Cavendish, Lord, 224, 240, 284, 289
 Cavendish, Sir Charles, 48
 Charenton, 235, 271
 Charles I., accession of, 18; Court
 of, 54, 59; summons Leicester
 home, 69, 70; at Althorp, 71;
 engaged in Civil War, 77-112;
 trial and execution, 114
 Charles II., speech to Waller, 107;
 restoration, 162; Court of, 216,
 217; illness, 218; mistresses, 221,
 222; sends for Duke of York,
 233; mentioned in Lady Sun-
 derland's letters, 218-298; in
 Reresby's memoirs, 300; dis-
 misses Sunderland, 301; retains
 Halifax in office, 303
 Chauncy, Sir William, 91
 Cheeke, Lady Dorothy, 287
 Chester, 84, 88
 Chillingworth, Mr., 87, 94, 95
 Churchill, Mr., 283
 Clare, Lord, 96
 Clarendon, Edward Hyde, Lord,
 81, 228, 289; his *History of the
 Rebellion*, 18, 28, 84, 101, 102,
 112, 116, 174
 Cleveland, Barbara, Duchess of, 179,
 187, 232, 272, 273
 Clifford, Lord, 284, 287
 Coke, Secretary, 40, 50-53, 68, 77
 Colepepper, Lord, 81
 Colepepper, Sir Thomas, 121
 Cornbury Park, 57
 Courtin, 277
 Coventry, 96
 Coventry, Sir William, 169, 180,
 229, 237, 257, 283, 286
 Créqui, Marechal de, 283
 Crofts, Bishop of Hereford, 63
 Crofts, Herbert, 8, 9
 Crofts, Sir William, 59, 96

- Cromwell, Oliver, 107, 113, 115, 119, 128, 141-144, 148
- Danby, Earls of, 57, 58, 209, 219, 258
- Devereux, Lady Penelope, 7, 18, 132
- Devereux, Sir John, 2, 3
- Devonshire, Lord, 49, 55, 56, 60
- Dorchester, Lord, 261
- Drake, Sir William, 202
- Dublin, 5, 113
- Dudley, House of, 34
- Edgcote, 91
- Edgehill, 91
- Edward I. and III., 2
- Edward VI., 2-5, 22
- Eland, Lord, 211, 226, 261, 262, 269-272, 273, 285
- Elizabeth, Princess, 116-119
- Elizabeth, Queen, 5-11, 22, 23
- Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, 8, 165
- Essex, Countess of, 11
- Essex, Earls of, 7, 10, 11, 14, 73, 82, 98, 99, 207, 219-221, 224, 225, 228, 255, 265, 285, 300, 301, 304
- Evelyn, John, 133, 134, 174-176, 221, 232, 251, 271, 300
- Fagg, Sir John, 219
- Falkland, Lord, 86, 94, 95, 101, 103
- Fane, Sir Ralph, 3
- Felton, Lady Betty, 240, 262, 276
- Feversham, Lord, 252, 287, 288
- Flushing, 7, 8, 13
- Fotherley, Sir Thomas, 121, 122
- Fox, Sir Stephen, 251
- Frascati, 19, 154, 155
- Gamage, Barbara (see Leicester)
- Gloucester, Duke of, 117, 118
- Gloucester, siege of, 93-96
- Godolphin, Sidney, 196, 208, 228, 245, 251, 263
- Goodricke, Sir Henry, 284, 289
- Goring, Mr., 222
- Gouvernet, Esther de, 270-272
- Grammont, Chevalier de, 79, 208, 277
- Grey, Lady Jane, 5, 6, 22
- Grey, Lord, 225, 233
- Groombridge, 30, 31,
- Guildford, 201
- Gwynne, Nell, 217, 221, 240
- Halifax, Dorothy Spencer, Lady, birth, 78; mentioned in her father's letters, 87, 96, 99; marriage, 160; birth of children, 170, 177; correspondence, 178, 187; death, 190
- Halifax, George Savile, Marquis of, marries Lady Dorothy Spencer, 168; his character, 212-214; his love for Rufford, 169, 250; appointed one of Council of Thirty, 209; created an Earl, 211; a Marquis, 303; letters to his brother, 170, 209-211, 217, 226, 235, 270; correspondence with Lady Sunderland, 209, 238, 248-252, 259-290; mentioned in Lady Sunderland's letters, 229, 231, 234, 255, 257; at Althorp, 263; speeches against Exclusion Bill, 294; attacked in House of Commons, 296-299; votes for Stafford's acquittal, 300; Lord Privy Seal, 303; tries to save Russell and Sidney, 305, 306
- Halifax, Gertrude Pierpoint, Marchioness of, 211, 240-243
- Hamburg, 152
- Hammond, Rector of Penshurst, 62, 63, 110
- Hampden, John, 31, 264
- Hampden, Mr., 264, 282
- Henrietta Maria, Queen, 18, 29, 54, 59, 62, 77, 88, 89, 94, 99, 110-112, 164
- Henry II., 1
- Henry VIII., 1-4
- Hervey, Lady, 225, 229, 246, 286
- Hervey, Mrs., 206, 229, 231, 246
- Holdenby House, 97
- Holland, Lord, 49, 52, 54-62, 116
- Holland, seat of Pelham family, 243, 245, 247
- Honywood, Sir John, 153
- Honywood, Sir Robert, 148
- Howard, Lord, of Escrick, 304
- Hyde, Lawrence, 228, 251, 255, 261, 263, 265
- Inchiquin, Lord, 113, 279, 288
- Isham, Sir Justinian, 131, 135, 136
- Jenkins, Sir Leoline, 225, 281
- Jones, Sir William, 236, 239, 244, 264, 267, 272
- Jonson, Ben, 19, 23
- Katharine of Braganza, Queen, 260, 287-289
- Killigrew, Sir William, 96

- Lampport, 131, 135
 Languet, 22
 Land, Archbishop, 40, 41, 52, 53, 70
 Leicester, Philip, Earl of, 16, 17, 39, 40, 55, 64, 82, 113, 114, 128, 143, 144, 222-225, 234, 236, 237, 267, 286, 287, 289, 305
 Leicester, Robert Dudley, Earl of, 6, 7, 22
 Leicester, Robert Sidney, first Earl of, 6-18
 Leicester, Robert Sidney, second Earl of, birth, 10; marriage, 12; sent to Denmark, 39; to Paris as ambassador, 40; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 79; joins King at York, 82; letters to Lady Carlisle and Lord Northumberland, 82-84; sets out for Ireland, 84; recalled to Oxford, 85; letter to Lady Sunderland, 104-106; dismissed from office, 100; retires to Penshurst, 112; quotation from his journal, 120, 124, 127, 128, 157-160; letters to Lord Strangford, 146; to Algernon Sidney, 152; to Lord Northumberland, 82, 160; at the Court of Charles II., 162-164; death, 200; lawsuit over his will, 201
 Leicester, Countess of, Barbara Gamage, 8, 9, 14
 Leicester, Countess of, Dorothy Percy, character, 29; letters to her husband, 41, 42, 49-54, 58-63; illness at Paris, 75; pleads for restoration of her husband's estates, 112; takes charge of the royal children, 117; claims Princess Elizabeth's jewel, 119; death, 156-160
 Leicester House, 50, 115, 116, 123, 144, 157, 162, 165, 195, 219
 Leigh, 120, 128, 165, 166
 Lely, Sir Peter, 173
 Lenthall, Speaker, 117, 142
 Lisle, Lord (see Philip, Earl of Leicester)
 Lisle, Robert, Lord, 115, 223, 225
 Lisle, Katharine Cecil, Lady, 114, 128
 Lloyd, *Memorials of Distinguished Loyalists*, 81, 107, 126
 Louvois, 277
 Lovelace, Lord, 57-61
 Lovel, Mr., 117, 118
 Marston Moor, 113
 Mary, Queen, 5
 Mary, Queen of France, 1
 Mazarin, Duchesse de, 232, 253, 283
 Middleton, Mrs., 276, 277, 283
 Mildmay, Anthony, 118
 Mildmay, Sir Henry, 118
 Modena, Duchess of, 253
 Monmouth, Duke of, 192, 210, 219, 220, 224, 225, 233, 254, 255, 260, 278, 280, 282, 284, 292, 293, 304
 Monmouth, Duchess of, 276, 278, 287, 289
 Montague, Edward, 229, 231, 239-248, 264
 Montague House, 219, 239, 240, 292
 Montague, Ralph, Duke of, 207, 219, 239, 245-248, 253, 259, 266, 272, 278, 287, 289, 296, 297, 303
 Montague, Walter, Abbot of Pontoise, 51, 115, 240
 Mordaunt, Lord, 180, 257, 260
 Moulins, De, 199, 285
 Mulgrave, Lord, 260, 285
 Nérac, 194, 199
 Nevcrs, Duc de, 283-285
 Newbury, Battle of, 100-102
 Newmarket, 245, 250, 291
 Northumberland, Algernon Percy, Earl of, 39, 49, 58, 77, 79, 80, 82, 160-162, 164, 165
 Northumberland, Henry, Earl of, 12, 13
 Northumberland, Elizabeth Wriothesley, Lady, 207, 239, 246, 252, 283, 286, 287, 303
 Northumberland House, 246
 Nottingham, 82-84, 87, 90
 Ogle, Lady, 246-252
 Ogle, Lord, 246
 Orange, William, Prince of, 174, 221, 292, 293, 294, 303
 Orleans, Charles, Duke of, 30
 Ormonde, Duke of, 85, 110, 113, 279, 284
 Orrery, Lady, 276, 282
 Osborne, Dorothy, 64, 65, 134-137
 Ossory, Lord, 279, 285
 Oxford, Court at, 85, 87, 91-100, 106, 110, 112; Parliament at, 301, 302
 Oxford, Lord, 283
 Pelham, Elizabeth, 240, 243, 245
 Pelham, Sir John, 115, 202, 219, 241-244

- Pelham, Lady Lucy, 73-75, 115, 133, 200, 206, 241, 249
 Pelham, Lucy, 240-249
 Pembroke, Mary, Countess of, 6, 17, 23, 24
 Pembroke, William, Earl of, 16, 114
 Penn, William, 172, 201, 203, 302
 Penshurst, granted to Sir William Sidney, 2; described in *Arcadia* and Ben Jonson's poem, 19, 20; pictures at, 22-24, 36-38, 128, 193, 203
 Percy, Henry, 47, 48, 61
 Petre, Lord, 282
 Petworth, 38, 56, 246
 Pierce, Dr., 125, 172
 Pierpoint, Gervase, 236, 240-249, 273, 287
 Plymouth, Lord, 262
 Portsmouth, Duchess of, 216, 217, 223, 232, 234, 240, 251, 256, 258, 267, 283, 287, 291-293, 298
 Powis, Lord, 282

 Rich, Lady Anne, 48, 49
 Richmond, Duchess of, 219
 Rochester, Earl of, 277
 Rohan, Mademoiselle de, 54, 55
 Rome, 151, 153-155
 Rufford, 169, 177, 178, 181, 182, 186, 209, 225-227, 231, 250, 252, 271, 281, 302
 Rupert, Prince, 55, 72, 93
 Russell, Lady Rachel, 207, 214, 239, 240, 272, 278, 291, 304
 Russell, Lord, 207, 213, 224, 239, 278, 291-294, 304

 Sacharissa (see Dorothy, Lady Sunderland)
 Salisbury, Earl of, 114
 Savile, Lady, 168, 169
 Savile, Lady Anne, 190, 191, 211, 238, 243, 244, 251, 252, 279, 286, 289, 303
 Savile, Lady Betty, 211, 287
 Savile, Lady Dorothy, 214
 Savile, Henry, travels in Spain, 170-173; groom of bed-chamber to Duke of York, 176; letters to Lord and Lady Halifax, 178-190; to Lady Sunderland, 183, 184; from Paris, 196, 197, 211, 218, 226, 227, 299; Envoy at Court of Versailles, 202, 207; mentioned in Lady Sunderland's letters, 234, 267, 273, 276, 277, 285; Vice-Chamberlain, 290; office in Admiralty, 303
 Savile, Lord George, 177, 272
 Savile, Lord William, 177, 272
 Savile, Sir William, 168
 Scroope, Lady, 234-236, 262, 267, 273, 276, 279, 282, 284, 286, 287, 289
 Scroope, Sir Carr, 289
 Sedley, Mrs., 273, 276
 Shaftesbury, Earl of, 207, 208, 210, 253, 255, 264, 266, 272, 274-276, 278-283, 286, 292, 294-298, 304
 Shaftesbury, Margaret Spencer, Countess of, 207, 275
 Sheen, 128, 129, 221
 Shrewsbury, 88, 89
 Shrewsbury, Lord, 225, 257, 260
 Sidney, Algernon, birth, 17; boyhood, 40, 53, 54; serves in Parliamentary army, 82, 113; retires from public life, 141; lives at Penshurst, 141-148; helps Lord and Lady Strangford, 147, 148; goes to Copenhagen, 148; Italy, 151; letters during exile, 149-155, 161, 193-195; returns to England, 200; stands for Parliament, 201, 202; lawsuit with brothers, 236, 237; charged with receiving bribes, 274, 275; trial and execution, 304, 305
 Sidney, Diana, Lady, 157, 193
 Sidney, Elizabeth, Lady, 126-128
 Sidney, Frances, Lady, 121, 122
 Sidney, Henry, birth, 78; travels, 156, 170; inherits legacies from mother, 157, and father, 200; elected for Bramber, 202; envoy at the Hague, 208; successful negotiations, 228-229; correspondence with Dorothy, Lady Sunderland, 207, 208, 218-220, 224, 226, 229-237, 241-257, 295, 298; with Anne, Lady Sunderland, 230, 231, 252, 253, 256-258, 294, 295, 303
 Sidney, Lady Mary, 3-6, 22, 23
 Sidney, Robert, 18, 43, 75, 102, 192, 193
 Sidney, Sir Henry, 3-6, 27
 Sidney, Sir Philip, 6, 7, 22
 Sidney, Sir William, 1-3
 Sion House, 12, 13
 Smythe, Customer, 10, 120, 131, 132
 Smythe, Lady Isabella, 18, 132
 Smythe, Robert, 137, 138, 233, 245
 Smythe, Sir John, 18, 132
 Smythe, Sir Robert, 131-137

- Smythe, Sir Sidney Stafford, 238-241
- Smythe, Sir Thomas, 131, 132
- Soissons, Olympia, Mancini, Contesse de, 231, 232
- Southampton, Earl of, 72, 81, 99, 114
- Southampton Square, 238-243
- Spencer, Gilbert, 159, 222, 223
- Spencer, Harry, 108, 115
- Spencer, Henry, Lord (see Sunderland)
- Spencer, Henry, Lord, 251, 268-271
- Spencer, Lady Penelope, 92, 177, 178, 181, 182, 190
- Spencer, Penelope, Wriothesley, Lady, 71, 89
- Spencer, Robert, 275, 287-289
- Stafford, Lord, 213, 282, 299, 300
- Stone, Nicholas, 71
- Strafford, Earl of, 52, 53, 76, 77, 79
- Strangford, Isabella Sidney, Viscountess, 121-124, 133, 147-148, 152, 153, 166, 194
- Strangford, Philip, Viscount, 121-124, 133, 145-148, 166
- Strangford, Thomas, Viscount, 10, 120
- Sudbury, Mr., 102
- Sunderland, Anne Digby, Countess of, marriage, 173; described by Princess Anne, 174, 175; friendship with Evelyn, 174-176, 195; mentioned in Dorothy, Lady Sunderland's letters, 260, 287, 288; letters to Henry Sidney, 230-231, 252, 253, 256-258; 294-295, 301
- Sunderland, Dorothy Sidney, Countess of, birth, 13; mentioned by her grandfather, 17; courted by Waller under the name of Sacharissa, 31-46; receives proposals of marriage from Lord Devonshire, 49; from Lord Lovelace, 55-61; marries Lord Spencer, 71-74; birth of children, 78, 92; receives the news of her husband's death, 102-104; petitions the king for her son's wardship, 109; lives at Penshurst, 110-124; friendship with Princess Elizabeth, 117, 118; lives at Althorp, 124; marries Sir Robert Smythe, 131; mentioned in Dorothy Osborne's letters, 134-137; birth of son, Robert Smythe, 137; relics at Boundes, 138, 139; helps Lady Strangford, 148-153; lives at Rufford, 177-190; life in London, 206-305; letters to Henry Sidney, 208, 209, 218-257, 295-298; letters on her niece's marriage, 240-249; letters to Lord Halifax, 250-252, 259-290; death and burial, 305, 306
- Sunderland, Henry Spencer, Earl of, birth and education, 71; marries Lady Dorothy Sidney, 73; goes to Paris, 74; speeches in Parliament, 80; joins King at York, 81; at Edgehill, 91; Bristol, 93; siege of Gloucester, 94-96; created Earl of Sunderland, 92; letters to wife, 88-100; killed at Newbury, 101; character given by Clarendon and Lloyd, 102, 107
- Sunderland, Robert, Earl of, birth at Paris, 78; education, 125-172; marries Lady Anne Digby, 173; sent to Paris, 195; obtains Algeron Sidney's pardon, 198-200; made Privy Councillor, 198; Secretary of State, 217; mentioned in his mother's letters, 245, 251-254, 259-268, 279, 282-288; supports Exclusion Bill, 292-294; dismissed from office, 300; restored to favour, 303
- Sutton-at-Hone, 131, 132, 137
- Tangier, 262, 263, 279
- Temple, Sir John, 62-64, 193, 194, 201
- Temple, Sir William, 64, 128, 207, 209-211, 216, 220, 221, 239, 284, 300
- Thornhill, 169, 190
- Thynne, Thomas, 185, 229, 234, 246, 265, 274
- Trémouille, Duc de la, 277, 283
- Tunbridge, 110
- Tunbridge Wells, 32, 134, 169, 286, 287, 289
- Vane, Sir Henry, 77, 142, 144, 149, 150
- Vandyke, 37-39, 56, 397
- Vaughan, Lord, 289, 303
- Vendôme, Grand Prieur de, 283
- Walker, 92
- Wall, Mrs., 221
- Waller, Edmund, courtship of Lady Dorothy Sidney, 31-46; Sacharissa Poems, 32-36, 38, 45-49; letter to Lady Dorothy, 44; to Lady Lucy Sidney, 73, 74; exile

- for plotting against Parliament, 107; visits to Lady Sunderland, 215; mentioned in her letters, 251, 276
- Walters, Lucy, 190, 260
- Wardour, Lord Arundel of, 282
- Wentworth, Lady Anne, 65
- Wentworth, Lady Harriet, 233, 273
- Westenhanger, 129, 131, 166, 167
- Weston, Judge, 283
- White, Roland, 10, 12, 18
- Wildman, 276
- Wilton, 6, 17
- Winchester, Lady, 262, 263
- Winchester, Lord, 251, 252, 273, 289
- Windsor, 2, 11, 58, 114, 169, 220
256, 265, 267, 279, 282, 288, 291
- Woosley, Sir Charles, 222
- Worminghurst, 201, 203
- York, 70, 81, 82,
- York, Anne Hyde, Duchess of, 176, 177, 208
- York, Maria D'Este, Duchess of, 215, 232, 273, 276
- York, Duke of, 176, 177, 189, 220, 233, 258, 266, 267, 272-286, 292-295, 304
- Zutphen, 7

THE END

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